Some islamic monuments of Jabal Nafusa in Libya

By

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SOME ISLAMIC MONUENTS OF JABAL NAFUSA IN LIBYA

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اسم الكتاب

بعض الآثار الإسلامية بجبل نفوسة في ليبيا

اسم المؤلف

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SOME ISLAMIC MONUMENTS OF JABAL NAFUSA IN LIBYA

These is submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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By
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School of Oriental and African Studies

Publications of the Departments
of Archaeology Libya

إلى والدي

اللذين علماني الاعتقاد بأنّ كل ما ينجزه المرء من عمل مهما كان مهماً فإنّه دائماً سيعد مساهمة متواضعة لخير الإنسانية .

TO MY PARENTS

Who taught me to believe that whatever work one does and however significant, it is always considered as a humble contribution to the good of humanity.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT

It is a well-known fact that Libya is a country which has received very little serious study in the field of Islamic art and archeaology .In Libya most research and study in art and archeaology has been centred on the Greek and Roman heritage, and even the prehistoric era has received considerably more attention than the Islamic period . In the past ten years, however, excavation have been carried out in some Islamic sites both in the east and south of the country , yet so many other sites remain unexcavated and unsurveyed .

The area of the Jabal Nafusa is considered to be one these important but neglected regions . The impetus behind this thesis, therefore , is to contribute to the present knowledge and it aims at paving the way for those who intend to go further by studying the remains of this area in greater detail . the other purpose of this thesis is to throw some light on some Islamic sites which should receive priority when carrying out excavation in the Jabal Nafusa .

One obstacle that meets the scholar is to establish the historical background relative to the area of study . In the Jabal Nafusa the historical information that we possess is scarce and sometimes obscure .

This thesis contains an attempt to study the history of this area, especially concerning the first centuries of the Islamic era . Analogy and comparison were applied in order to form the historical background needed for studying some old Islamic monuments in Jabal Nafusa .

In chapter two , and four , the emphasis is apparent on studying architecture and decoration . In the field of architecture a detailed study was applied to some Islamic remains in the area. These selected monuments reveal the variety of architectural features in the Jabal . Again comparative examples show the

outside influence on Jabal and in addition architectural characteristics of local origin could be pointed out .

The same method was followed when discussing the decoration which were found in some of the mosques mentioned. Comparison between these decoration and other similar dated examples made it possible to see the influence of other decoration found in different parts of the Islamic world .

In chapter five the study of some mosques in Tmizda area has revealed new elements represented in the Christian and Roman influence on the Jabal .

Chapter six is devoted to inscription which were found various mosques in the Jabal Nafusa . Comparative material helped in studying their style as well as suggesting an approximate date concerning the inscription of the Jabal .

Finally this thesis could be considered as a humble attempt to illustrate some aspects of the Jabal Nafusa , not only in respect to its importance in Islamic studies, but also in connection to other areas of study upon which some questions have been raised throughout the thesis .

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations

AL-Ibar	Ibn Khaldun Kitab al - Ibar wa Diwan AL - Mubtada wa al - Khabar.
AL-Kamil	Ibn al-Athir , Kitab al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh .
AL-Mughrib	AL-Bakri , AL-Masalik wa al-Mamalik , AL-Mughrib fi Dhikr Bilad Ifriqiya wa al-Maghrib .
AL-Bayan	Ibn Idhari , Kitab al-Bayan al-Mughrib Fi dhikr AL-Andalus wa al-Maghrib.
AL-Siyar	A . AL-Shammakhi , Kitab AL-Siyar .
AL-Fath AL-Arabi	T . AL-Zawi , Kitab AL-Fath Al-Arabi Li Libya .
Futuh	Ibn Abd AL-Hakam , Futuh Ifriqiya wa AL-Andalus .
Mujam	T . AL-Zawi Mujam AL-Buldan AL-Libiyya .
Mawkib	A . Muammar , AL-Ibadiyya fi Mawkib AL-Tarik .

Rihalt	AL-Tijani Rihlat AL-Tijani .
A . O	Ars Orientalis .
Chronique	Abu Zakaria , Chronique d,Abou Zakaria .
S . R . I .	Stanford Research Institute .

PREFACE

PREFACE

Al though some historical information concerning the area of the Jabal Nafusa was provided by a number of old writer and then quoted by modern scholars , the artistic and archaeological aspect of this area would scarcely draw attention . This, however, is due mainly to the topographical circumstances of the area . Most of the old sites in Jabal are situated in places far from the roads .

The source material discussed in this thesis is the result of extensive fieldwork . Apart from there being historical buildings, the monuments studied in this work are looked upon by the people of the Jabal as blessed and venerated . This could be to their connection with the most famous and learned people who lived during the early centuries of Islam .

The system of transliteration followed in this thesis is a rather simplified version of that employed in the Encyclopedia of Islam . It uses th, j, kh, dh, sh, gh, and k, and w for the letter waw. common architectural terms such as mihrab , riwaq and suma are given diacritical marks whenever they are used in the text .

I am taking this opportunity to express my greatest pleasure and deep gratitude to Dr G.Feheravari who has encouraged me from the beginning to study this topic and under whose supervision this work has been written. It is also a pleasure to acknowledge the help I received from the Department of Antiquities in Libya, including those were a great help during the period of gathering material for this work . My thanks are also due to professor J.Segal for translating the Hebrew inscription; all my colleagues and friends who contributed considerably through discussion and the drawing of my attention to important points. Last but least, my gratitude to the members of the School of Oriental and African Studies and the staff of its Library.

I

THE LAND AND HISTORY

CHAPTER I

THE LAND AND HISTORY

Libya is the official name of the North African state stretching between Egypt and Tunisia. It is located along the southern coast of the Mediterranean between longitude 9° and 26° East and latitude 33° and 19° North .

Having the Mediterranean on the north, Libya is bounded to the east by Egypt, to the south by the Republic of Chad and Niger, to the south east corner by the Sudan, and to the west by Tunisia and Algeria .

The total land of this vast country is roughly 1,754,000 square kilometers (679,378 square miles).That is to say, it is almost eight times the size of British Isles, or as large as France, Italy, Spain and Germany together [(1)].

There are no true mountains in the country since the ranges of Atlas Mountains end in Tunisia . There are , however. a few ranges of highland (Jabal) [(2)].

Jabal Tarabulus (al-Jabal al-Gharbi) is divided into four parts: Jabal Msallata, Gharyan, Yefrin, and Nafusa. The last-named extends from the Tunisian border in the west about 200 kilometers (124 miles) Eastward .

The Jabal's north facing escarpment is dissected by many wadis (valleys) whish, being narrow at their heads, broaden out northwards into the Jafara plain, whish extends approximately 80 miles to the coastal strip . To the southern side of the Jabal lies irregularly of al-Hamada al-Hamra, extending about 60 miles [(3)].

Today Jabal Nafusa lies within the province of Gharyan. It can be reached from Tripoli by two principal routes.one of these is the main road running south to Gharyan(about 94 km from Tripoli)

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(1) Stanford Research Institute Area handbook for Libya , Washington 1969 , p. 9 .

(2) Muhammad al-Murabit, Fact about Libya , Malta, 1964, p . 13 .

(3) S . R .I , OP . CIT , P . II .

and then west passing through the towns and villages of the Jabal.This road is known as "the upper road" (الطريق العلوي).The other is another main road, which runs south-west from Tripoli, crossing the Jafara plain until it reaches the town of Nalut (Lalat) which is about 285 km from Tripoli. from Nalut the road goes south for about 210 km. to the town of Ghadamis (Cydamus).

To the east of Nalut (about 87 km) is the large town of Kabaw, and further east, another 7 km. by road, is the old village of Farsatta, situated high on the side of a valley. From Kabaw traveling south, about 25 km, one reaches the valley of Sharwas (SARUS). On the western side this valley lies the village of Tandimmira while to the east is the town of Sharwas, situated in the valley near it's head. Sharwas town lies within the area of al-Haraba, which has its administrative centre in al-Sha'biyya (Baghtura) about 9 km. north-east of Sharwas; another 7 km east of Sharwas is the old town of Wighu .

Some 50 km. by road to the east is the area of al-Rehebat . From here, traveling by "the upper road" northwards about 36 km , is the town of Jadu overlooking the Jafara plain. The road continues to the east passing through the town of Yefren, and then to Gharyan .

In the past, the Jabal has received scant attention from writers. The two most important mediaeval description were those of Ibn Hawqal, and al-Bakri .

Ibn Hawqal [4] wrote of Jabal Nafusa as a high mountainous area in which there were two towns; Sharwas in the middle of the Jabal and another town called Jadu, both of which had a mosque and a Minbar. He noted that the Jabal was inhabited by Ibadis, and that only the Kharijites had settled there since the rise of Islam.

Al-Bakri[5] wrote that Jabal Nafusa was six days journey from Tripoli, and that there was tribe called Banu Zammur who had a well defended fort . Near here was another tribe called Banu

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[4] Ibn Hawqal , Surat al-Ard , ed . Kramers , Leyden , 1938-9 , pp . 94-5 .

[5] Al-Bakri , al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik al-Mughrabi fi Dhikr Bilad Ifriqiya wa al-Maghrib, ed De Slane , Cairo 1857 , p . 9 .

Tandimmira, who had three forts , Between this tribes stood the town of Jadu where there were markets and many Jews. He pointed out that the "mother" of all the villages in the Jabal was an Ibadi town. He also mentioned that there was no mosque in Sharwas, nor in any of its three hundred surrounding villages .

HISTORICAL SETTING:-

وما تشهد أخباره كلها بأنه جيل عزيز على الأيام وأنهم قوم مرهوب جانبهم شديد بأسهم كثير جمعهم مظاهرون لأمم العالم وأجياله من العرب والفرس ويونان والروم.

" ابن خلدون "

"All their past witnesses that the Berbers were respected, brave, numerous pople who played an important part throughout history. They occupied a high place among the great nations: the Arabs, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans [6].

"Ibn Khaldon"

Our knowledge of the Libyans is very little. The prehistorical and anthropological studies will, however, throw some light on this matter. The first mention of the Libyans (Libu) can be traced to the second Millenium B.C. in the Egyptian text [7].

About the tenth century B.C. the country was inhabited by groups of people called the Libyan.(Later they came to be know as the Berbers[8].) Although the subject has been mentioned at some length elsewhere [9], we can not be certain of their origin nor indeed of the country they came from. It has been suggested that were a Mediterranean race. Others believe that they first came from the

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(6) Ibn Khaldun , Kitab al-Ibar wa Diwan al-Mubtada wa al-Khabar Cairo , 1867 , vol . VI . pp .103-4 .

(7) I.E.L.Haynes , Antiquities of Tripolitania , Kent , 1965 , pp . 18-22 .

(8) E.Rossi , Storia di Tripolitania dalla Conquista Araba al-1911, Roma , 1968 , pp.4-5 . See also H . H . Abd al-Wahhab , Khulasat Tarikh Tunisia , Tunisia , 1968 , p . 13 .
E.F . Gautier , Le passé de L Afrique du Nord trans . H . al-Husayni Tripoli , 1970, pp . 147-8.

(9) Gautier , op . cit . , p . 27. Ibn al-Hakam , Futuh Ifriqiya wa al-Andalus ed . A . al-Tabba , Beirut 1964 , pp . 27-8 See also Lbn Khaldun , al- Ibar pp . 89-97 .

upper nile or Ethiopia (Hamites). Still a third group relates them to the Semitic race in Arabia.[10]

Haynes quoting Herodotus tells us about the Libyans " The inhabitants of the Golf of Sirt (سرت) Nasamones. Beside them there were the Psylli, the Macae, and the Gindanes, the latter extending to the lesser Gulf of Sirt Qabis in Tunisia. While the Lotophagi (lotos-eaters) were in the coastal plain, the Garamantes occupied the southern part of country (Fazzan).[11]

The information which had been given by Herodatus about the Libyan tribes remained unchanged up till the Roman period . It is from the third century A . D. that we hear of new names such as: the Leuathae, the Seli, and the Austurians[12]It is difficult, however, to say whether they were new arrivals in the country, or they were new names given to the above mentioned tribes .

Herodatus description of Libyan is milk drinking and flesh eating nomads.It is know that as a result of the Phoenician civilization influence some of the nomads settled down and lived on agriculture.[13] These tribes were speaking a language later evolved to different Berber vernaculars some of which still survive in Ghadamis, Suknah, Jabel Naeusa, Zwara, Gerba, and in the middle of Algeria. Furthermore the Phoenician language spread among them and was spoken even after the conquest.[14]

Archaeological evidence has shown that the Libyan worshipped the sun and the moon and were influenced by the old Egyptian beliefs.[15] Their religious views were greatly affected by the Semitic Phoenicians.subsequently Christianity established itself in the country till the conquest of the Arabs.The Phoenicians,

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(10) Haynes , op . cit , p . 18 .

(11) Ibid , pp . 18-9 . A . Fantoli , La Libya , Roma , 1933 , pp . 7 , 15-6 . The Germantes are probably one of the Berber tribes , related to Banu Masalt , a branch of the big tribe Lawata . see T. Ahmad al-Zawi , Mu Jam al-Buldan al-Libiyya , Tripoli , 1968 , pp . 101-2 .

(12) Rossi , op , cit , pp . 5-6 . see also Fantoli , op , cit , p . 17 .

(13) Rossi , op . cit , p . 5 . Abd al-Wahhab , op . cit , p . 17 . see also , J.S . Nickerson , A short history of North Africa , New York , 1968 , p . 21 .

(14) Rossi , op . cit , pp . 10-1 . Gautier , op . cit , pp . 91 , 49 , 96-100 .

(15) Haynes, op . cit , pp . 21-4 .

a Semitic people akin to the Arabs started moving towards the west of the Mediterranean by 1000 B.C We do not know exactly when they established themselves in Libya , but what we do know is that they were already dominating the west part of the country namely the three commercial centres : Leptis Magna , Tripoli and Sabratha by the end of the VII century B.C . The Greeks on the other hand invaded the east part of the country marking the borders between them and the Phoenicians at the Gulf of Sirt (area philenorum).(16)

Capturing Messina in 265 - 64 B.C. the Phoenicians represented a real threat to the Romans who decided to put an end to their rivals. The seizure of the city of Messina marks the beginning of punic wars, which ended in 146 B.C. in the destruction of Cartage and the establishment of Roman rule in Africa.(17) It can be said that the rule of Carthage had ceased to exist in the III century B.C . in the west part of Libya, Later know as Tripoli Tania.(18)

In 146 B.C . the Romans succeeded in destroying the town of Carthage but their fear an uprising in the area was the main impetus for establishing their direct rule in Africa .

Tripolitania become part of the Roman Empire not long before the struggle within the empire which ended with Octavian's victory at Actium in 31 B.C .(19) The Romans , faced mith the tribes strong hostilities , fortified in the first place , their coastal towns and then fought the Libyans, reaching the region of the Garamantes in the Fazzan .

At the time of Septimius Severus 193 - 211 A.D . they built the first fort in Abu-Ngem , situated on the main road leading to the Fazzan .

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(16) Ibid , pp . 25-8 . Rossi , op , cit . pp . 7-10 . see also Nickerson , op , cit . p . 12 .

(17) Nickerson , op . cit , pp . 11-2 . Rossi , op . cit , p . 8 . Cf .H.G . Welles, The outline of history , New York, 1931 , pp. 432-3 , 439-48 .

(18) Tripoli Tania is a Roman name which first appeared in the III century A.D , meaning the whole land between the Gulf of Sirt and the Gulf of Qabis , in Tunisia . It was , in fact, derived from the names of the three cities: Oea(Tripoli), Leptis Magna, and Sabratha. For further details see Rossi , op . cit , pp . 3-4 .

(19) Haynes , op . cit , p . 11 .

A few years later the other tow forts in al-Qaryat Al-Gharbiyya and sydamose (Ghadamis) were built.[20] Tese forts function was twofold: to be used as the first defense line against the tribes and to be bases for striking deep into the interior of the country. It seems that the end of the Severus family rule was the start of rebellions and troubles in Libya and the beginning of the decline of the Roman Empire. In 439 A.D. the Vandals captured Carthage ending Roman rule in Tunisia .[21] Although their rule in Tripolitanian lasted for about a century, the fact that they were defeated by the Byzantines in 531-32 A.D. is an indication that they were not firmly established in the country.[22]

Archaeological discoveries tend to show that the Byzantiane authority did not extend far beyond the coastal strip. Since they were regarded as invaders they were faced with the same degree of hostility , and had to cope with the rebels for a long time .[23]

Towards the end of their rule the great Berber tribal groups of medieval Tripolitanian emerged; Nafusa and Hawwara [24], who were to play an important role in the immediate future .

Looking back at history we see that Tripolitania changed hands many times prior to the Arab arrival . Often the tribes in the interior part of the country refused to recognize the invaders authority , nevertheless they were affected to a certain extent by their ideas and their style of life .

The Punic influence can be noted in Tripolitania and some other parts of Ifriqiya, even after the collapse of Carthage: in addition to Punic language which was spoken beside the Greek and the Roman the signs of this influence may be observed in the name of the people as well as in administrative terms and religious life.[25]

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(20) Ibid , pp . 39-40 . More information about Septimus Severus see Nickerson , op . cit , pp . 26-9 . Gautier , op . cit , pp . 92-4 .

(21) Haynes op . cit , p . 61 .

(22) Rossi , op . cit , p . 20 . Nickerson , op . cit , p , 46 .

(23) Haynes , op . cit , pp . 66-7 .

(24) Ibid , p . 67 See also Husan Munis , Fath al-Arab li al-Maghrib Cairo 1947 , pp . 50-1 .

(25) Rossi , op . cit , p . 10 . See also Fantoli , op . cit , p . 49 .

The survival of the Punic language for a considerable length of time helped the Arabic language to spread on a large scale among the inhabitants.It was also the Punic religious beliefs, Phoenician in the first place. which paved the way for the adoption of Christianity and later Islam by the Berbers .[26]

Although the Romans greatly influenced the new Latin countries (neo-Latin),so far no such influence on the language and traditions of the Berbers has been shown.On the other hand the Roman architectural and artistic achievements still survive throughout Tripolitania .[27]

Several recent archaeological excavations have now increased our knowledge of the Romans in Tripolitania . Christianity, for instance was adobted by the local people in their time, although the adoption of Catholicism was due to later Byzantine propaganda.[28]

In spite of the fact that the Byzantine rule in Tripolitania lasted for a long time, it seems that their civilization did not have any lasting effect in the country, however successful they were in administrative organization.[29]

Amr b.al-As was not convinced that conquering Egypt in 21 A.H./642 A.D. was a complete victory, for he could see that the western part of the conquered land was under the constant threat of the Byzantines.[30] Hence he entered Barqah in 21 A.H (642-3 A.D) moving along the coast toward Tripolitania.[31] "Uqba b.Nafi", simultaneously crossed the desert to the town of Zawila.[32]

Since Tripoli was well fortified, Amr b. al-As had to besiege it for sometime, during which the inhabitants of the city asked for

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(26) Rossi , op . cit , pp . 10-1 . Gautier , op . cit , pp . 91 , 100-1 .

(27) Haynes , op . cit , pp . 41-4 .

(28) Ibid , pp . 66-7 .

(29) Rossi , op . cit , p . 22 .

(30) H.Munis , op . cit , pp . 52-3 . Cf . Rossi , op . cit , p . 26.

(31) Al-Baladhuri , Futuh al-Buldan ed . R . Muhammad Rawan , Cairo 1932 , p . 227. Al-Bakri , op . cit , p . 8 . See also Ibn Al-Athir , Kitab al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh , Leyden , 1867, vol . III , p . 19 .

(32) Al-Bakri , op . cit , p . 10 . Ibn al-Hakam , op . cit , p . 30 .

help from Nafusa.[33] But as to whether such help was, in fact, received, there are no historical accounts .

Amr eventually captured the city, and having demolished parts of its wall, headed towards Sabra (Sabratha) where he met resistance.[34] From Sabar he sent part of his army under the command of Bisr b.Arta to the town of Waddan,[35]while he himself moved south towards Sharwas, in Jabal Nafusa.[36]

Having conquered sharwas, it was then clear to Amr that any further progress towards the west would necessarily meet the challenge of the outnumbered army of Gregoris. He sent for the Caliph's permission to invade Ifriqiya,[37] possibly before leaving behind the town of Shawras.

The letter reads :

" إنّ الله قد فتح علينا أطرابلس وليس بينها
وبين افريقيه الا تسعة أيام فان رأى أمير
المؤمنين أن يغزوها فتحها الله على يديه ".

"Allah has made possible for us to conquer Atrablus (Tripoli), between her and Ifriqiya lies no more than nine days . Should the Amir al-Muminin desire to fight so it will be done , and may Allah conquer her in his hands" .

Umar b . al-Khattab , the Caliph , however , disapproved the proposal answering :

(لا إنها ليست بافريقية ولكنها المفرقه غادرة مغدور بها لا يغزوها أحد ما حييت)

That is not Ifriqiya, but a cause of separation, it cheats and it has been cheated, no one shall attempt to conquer her so far as I exist".[38]

Amr,therefore, went back to Egypt in 23/644, leaving no one to rule on his behalf except in Barqha where he left Uqba b.Nafi .

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(33) Al-Tijni , Rihlat al-Tijani , Tunisia , 1958 , p . 10 . Cf . H.Munis , op . cit , p . 63 .
(34) Ibn Abd al-Hakam , op . cit , pp . 50-1 . See also al-Bkri , op . cit , pp . 19-20 .
(35) Ibn Abd al-Hakam , Futuh , pp . 50-1 . See also al-Bakri , op . cit , p . 12 .
(36) Al-Bakri , al-Mughrib , p . 12 .
(37) Ifriqiya is an early Arabic name for modern Tunisia and a part of Algeria . Amr b. al-Asmeant by Ifriqya , the area west to the conquered land so far .
(38) Ibn Abd al-Hakam , op . cit , p . 33 .

This first Islamic conguest ended in the middle of the year 23/644 marking Zawila and Sharwas as the farthest points towards the west.[39] It seems to be an exploration for the next expeditions to come .

In 25/646 the third Caliph, Uthman b.Affan, appointed Abd Allah b. sa d b.Abi al-Sarh as the governor of Egypt.[40] Having obtained the Caliph's consent, Abd Allah led the second Islamic expedition to the Maghrib in 27/648.[41] The Arabs faced no difficulties until they reached the town of Subitalah, in Tunisia, where a bloody battle resulted in the death of Gregoriys in 28/649 .[42]

Abd Allah too, returned to Egypt, leaving no one to represent him in the newly conquered land. The second conquest, like the first one, did not end in any direct rule in the area .

The assassination of the Caliph , Uthman in 35/656 created disturbances within the Islamic Empire. Therefore, no further attempt to conquer the Maghrib was made until the Umayyads took over in the year 41/661.[43]

Muawiya, the first Umayyad Caliph , appointed Muawiya b.Hudayj as the leader of his army with an order to conquer al-Maghrib in 45/666.[44] But the invasion of Ibn Hudayj which lasted for some three years was not of great importance, since he did not achive in completion of Islamic conquest in Ifriqiya .

Ugha b.Nafi succeeded Ibn Hudayj in the next Islamic conquest .By building the city of al-Qayrawan, in Ifriqiya ,in 51/671[45] he established the first Islamic base .

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(39) Ibn Idhari , Kitab al-Bayan al-Mughrib fi Akhbar al-Andulus wa al-Maghrib ed.G.S.Colin and E. Levi - Provencal, Leyden, 1948, vol . I , P. 8 .

(40) Ibid , p . 9 . See also Ibn Abd al-Hakam , op. cit , p. 34.

(41) Al-Baladhuri , op. cit , p .228 .

(42) H.Munis , op . cit , pp . 105-6 ; cf . Ibn Ibhari , al-Bayan , vol . I , pp. II-3 . See also Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol. III, p 70. Ibn Abd al-Hakam ,, Futuh , p . 35 .

(43) Ibn Idhari, al-Bayan, vol . I . p. 15 . Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol . III , p. 342 .

(44) Ibn Idhari , al-Bayan , vol . I , pp . 16-7.

(45) Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil , vol. III, p. 387.

During the years 49-55/669-675 Uqba through his ceaseless fightings with the locals, reached the town of Germa, in the Fezzan, and Kawar, further south. During his presence Uqba's policy encouraged a great number of Berbers to adopt Islam .

Once more the conqueror left the newly attached lands at the order of the Caliph, in the year 55/674.[46] This time however, the Islamic army remained with Abu al-Muhajir Dinar, in command.

Dinar held this responsibility until the second Umayyad Caliph, Yazid sent Uqba back to al-Maghrib in 62/682-3 .[47]

Under the leadership of Uqba, this time, the Arabs advanced towards the "farther west" (المغرب - Morocco) till they reached the Atlantic Ocean .

On his way back, near Tahuda [48] he was killed by the Berbers in 64/683. Zuhayr b.Qays al-Balawi in taking charge of the Islamic troops,retreated to the town of Barqah,leaving al-Qayrawan to Kusayla the chief of the Berbers .[49]

In spite of all those attempts, it is, therefore, clear that the Arabs did not succeed in establishing any lasting direct rule in al-Maghrib. But although Kusayla drove back the Arabs as far as Barqah, this was no more than a political achievement, for the Islamic beliefs had already established among the natives. Nor did the Berber rule in al-Qayrawan last long.The Umayyad Caliph, Abd al-Malik b.Marwan sent Zuhayr b.Qays al-Balawi to al-Maghrib in the year 69/688-89. he defeated the Berbers and recaptured al-Qayrawan, but on his way back he was attacked and killed by Byzantines near Barqah .[50]

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(46) Ibn Idhari , al-Bayan , vol . I , p . 21 . See also Ibn Abd al-Hakam , op . cit , p . 55 .

(47) Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol . IV , p . 89 . Al-Baladhuri , op . cit , p . 230 . See also Ibn Ibhari , al-Bayan , vol . I , p . 23 .

(48) It is a village in the Awras Mountains , See , for example , al-Bakri , op . cit , 72-3 .

(49) Ibn Abd al-Hakam , Futuh , p . 61 , Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol . IV , p . 91 , Ibn Idhari , al-Bayan , vol . I , pp . 30-1 .

(50) Ibn Idhari , al-Bayan , vol . I , pp . 31-2 . Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol . IV . p . 251 .

The Berbers gathered under the leadership of al-Kahina[51], the new Berber chief, who defeated Hassan b.al-Numan al-Ghassani, the newly appointed Muslim leader in 79/698-99. Hassan withdrew his troops and retreated to the area of Sirt, where he settled down in a place later named Qusur Hassan (the palaces of Hassan)[52] waiting for the Caliph's help.

The Berbers, meanwhile, went on burning and destroying the countryside chattels, for they believed that the Arabs had invaded al-Maghrib in order to possess their wealth . This would make the Arabs give up any idea of further invasion.[53] That proved to be wrong, for in 81/700-701 Hassan now backed by the Caliph's help attacked the Berbers, and finally killed al-kahina in the Awras Mountains in Algeria . Having defeated the berbers , Hassan went to the city of Cartage, which he captured after a great battle, putting an end to the Byzantine rule in the Maghrib in 82/702.[54] Having established the first Islamic rule in the area, and clearing the way for any further expansion of Islam in the farther Maghrib and Spain, Hassan went back to Damascus in 85/705.[55]

The taking over of the Caliphate by the Umayyads created great political problems within the Islamic Empire.[56] As the Umayyads persecuted their enemies, some of them escaped to the new Islamic territories in al-Maghrib, in order to be secure. They found shelter among the tribes, who were not on good terms with the Umayyad governors in the area.[57]

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(51) (Al-Kahina is the name of the woman , who took over the leadership of her Berber tribe, Jarawa , in the Awras Mountains , in Algeria . She is mentioned in almost every historical book , dealing with the Arab conquest of the Maghrib . yet , we have not enough information, either about her real personality , or the role she played prior to Hassan's second invasion in 81/700-701 .

(52) Ibn Abd al-Hakam , Futuh , p . 63 . Al-Bakri , op . cit , p . 8 . See also al-Tahir Ahmad al-Zawi , Mujam , pp . 278-9 .

(53) Ibn Idhari , al-Bayan , vol . I , pp . 36-7 .

(54) For further details see h . Munis , op . cit , pp . 259-60 .

(55) Ibn Idhari , al-Bayan , vol . p . 41 ; cf . Ibn Abd al-Hakam , Futuh , p . 65 .

(56) Ahmad Amin , Fajr al-Islam Cairo , 1928 , pp . 304-8

(57) Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol . V , p . 237 . Al-Tijani , Rihlat , p . 207 .

In fact, it was on the Arabs that the Umayyads based their own dynasty. The Umayyad army in the Maghrib consisted of two large groups: al-Qaysiyya and al-Madariyya, who fought each other to secure upper hand in the area. All these facts mentioned above created the right atmosphere for the growth of various Islamic sects.

Many historians [58] believe that the Ibadiyyah was one of the branches of the Kharijite sect. The Ibadis,[59] however do not relate themselves to the same sect .

Al-shammakhi tells us that Maslama b.Sad was the first who initiated Ibadi beliefs in al-Maghrib. He was a bigoted Ibadi. "I would like to see" he said "this religion practiced for one day, and I do not mind if I die at the end of it".[60]

At any rate it is rather difficult to find the individual or group responsible for the foundation and the spread of Ibadiyya in al-Maghrib .

In 127-8 / 744-5 the Ibadis revolted in the city of Tripoli. The governor of al-Qayrawan, Abd al-Rahman b.Habib, sent his brother to quieten the rebels. Although he killed the leader of the movement, he shortly faced a second Ibadi uprising. As Abd al-Rahman thought his brother's killing of the rebel leader incited the Ibadis, he replaced him by another. But in Tripoli he was besieged , and at last defeated, and sent back to al-Qayrawan by the Ibadis,who were now under the leadership of al-Harith al-Hadrami and Abd al-Jabbar al-Muradi.[61]

This is how the first Ibadi state came to be established in Tripoli . Soon after it extended towards the aest till the area of Sirt.

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(58) Ahmad b.Said al-Shammakhi , Kitab al-Siyar , Cairo , 1947 , p . 70 . Ali Yahya Muammar, al-Ibadiyya fi Mawqib al-Tarikh Cairo 1964 , part I , pp . 33-5 .

(59) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 70 . Abu Rabi SULAYMAN AL-Baruni , Mukhtasr Tarikh al-Ibadiyya , Tunisia , 1936 , p . 40 .

(60) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 98 .

(61) Ibid , pp . 1256 ; al-Raqiq al-Qayrawani , Tarikh Ifriqiya wa al-Maghrib ed . al-Munji al-Kabi , Tunisia , 1968 , pp . 128-9 . Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol . V , p . 237 . Ibn Abd al-Hakam writes al-Haris instead of al-Harith .

Shortly afterwards al-Harith and Abd al-Jabbar were found dead in suspicious circumstances . The Ibadis chose Ismail b.Yazid al-Nafusi as their successor.[62] This first Ibadi state did not last long, for Abd al-Rahman sent his cousin Shuayb b.Uthman to fight the rebels, himself following him. The Ibadis were defeated and their first state came to an end in 132/753.[63]

The second successful attempt was made in 140/757-8, when the Ibadis conferred the Imamate upon Abu al-Khattab b.al-Samah al-Muafiri in a small village near Tripoli, called Sayyad.[64] Abu al-Khattab supported by Nafusa and other Berbers occupied Tripoli, and became the first recognized Ibadi Imam in the region.

In al-Qayrawan,shortly after, the Abbasi governor was killed when the Warfajjuma tribe captured the city. Under their rule the citizens of al-Qayrawan were treated with cruelty, which led Abu al-Khattab to enter al-Qayrawan in 141/758-9.[65] Having appointed Abd al-Rahman b.Rustum[66] as a governor of al-Qayrawan he left for Tripoli .

In 144/761 Abu Al-Khattab himself was defeated, and killed by Muhammad b.al-Ashath, the Abbasid leader, at Maghmadas, east of Tripoli. Abu Hurayra al-Zanati failed to stop the Abbasid army.[67] Having defeated the strong Ibadi army, Ibn al-Ashath sent a contingent to the town of Waddan and Zawila. the Ibadi stronghold. Meanwhile Ibn Rustum first tried to join the Ibadi

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(62) Ibn Khaldun , al-Ibar , vol . VI , p . 3 . Ibn Abd al-Hakam, Futuh , p . 108 .

(63) Al-Raqiq , op . cit , p . 129 . Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol . V, p . 237 .

(64) See Ibn Khaldun , al-Ibar , vol . VI , p . 112 . Al-Tahir al-Zawi, Tarikh al-Fath al-Arab fi Libiya Cairo 1963, pp . 132-4 . Al-Shammakhi , in his book , al-Siyar , p . 126 said :
"ودخل مدينة طرابلس (أبو الخطاب) ومعه جماعة المسلمين وذلك عام أربعين ومائة وأدخلوا في الجواليق على هيئة الرفقة فلما توسطوا المدينة أشهروا السلاح وقالوا : (لا حكم إلا الله) " .

"Abu al-Khattab entered the city of Tripoli with a group of Muslims who were hidden in sacks . When they reached the centre of the city , they came out shouting : (No rule but God's rule) " .

(65) Ibn Khaldun, al-Ibar vol . VI , pp . 111-2 . Ibn Idhari al-Bayan , vol . I , pp . 70-1 . Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil, vol.V, p.241.Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, pp128-30. Cf. al-Raqiq, op. cit, pp . 141-2 .

(66) Abd al-Rahman b.Rustum , of Persian origin , was the first Rustumid Imam in Tahert .

(67) Ibn alAthir , al-Kamil , vol. v . p . 241 . Al-Zawi , al-Fath al-Arabi , pp . 137-8 . cf . Ibn Khaldun , al-Ibar , vol . VI , p. 112 . Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 132 .

Imam, but when in Qabis he heard of the Ibadi defeat, he escaped to al-Qayrawan. Before his arrival,however, the Abbasid supporters had taken over the city and arrested him . Later recommended by an influential friend, he was released, and left for JabalSufajjaj,[68] near the town of Tahert.[69] After a long chase and failing to capture Ibn Rustum, Ibn al-Ashath returned to al-Qayrawan .

Another attempt to establish an Ibadi state happened in Abu Hatim's successful uprising in Tripoli, in the year 153/770.[70]

After a long siege he entered the city of al-Qayrawan.[71] Hearing of the Abbasid army approach to Tripoli, he left al-Qayrawan, in order to stop their progress . Since the fight broke out in al-Qayrawan in his absence he returned to the city. There he silenced the rebels , and for the second time went to face the Abbasid army . The battle which then took place outside of Tripoli. ended in the Ibadi defeat.[72] Abu Hatim's death marks the end of the second Ibadi Imamate in Tripoli .

From then until we hear of the Rustumid Imamate in Tahert in 160/777, there appears a large gap. Ibadi historians [73] assert that Ibn Rustum was regarded as (Imam Kutman)[74] during that period . The fact that Abu Hatim used to send him the Zakat tends to support their assertion: it shows that Abu Hatim was merely (Imam difa).[75] For som 16 years prior to 160 A.H . Ibn Rustum tried to strengthen his position among the Ibadis. In this year he

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[68] Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 133 ; cf . Ibn Idhari , al-Bayan , vol . I , p . 72 .

[69] This is the old Tahert , a per-Islamic site , situated in the South-West of modern Algeria . The new town of Tahert , which was built by Ibn Rustum , is not far from the old one .

[70] bn al-Ath-ir , al-Kamil , vol . V , p. 458 ; cf . al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 134 .

[71] Al-Raqiq , op . cit , pp . 146-7 . See also Ibn Khaldun , al-Ibar , vol . VI , p . 113 .

[72] Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 136 . Ibn Khaldun , al-Ibar , vol . VI , p . 79 . See also Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol . V. p . 290 .

[73] Muhammad Ali Abu Dabbuz , Tarikh al-Maghrib al-Kabir Cairo 1963, vol . III , pp. 287, 293-4 . Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 139 .

[74] The Ibadis during peace time called their Imams Amir al-Muminin . But when conquered and oppressed by outsiders the Imam was called Imam Kutman (secret Imam) .

[75] During the time of war or threat the Ibadis , when they had no ruler , elected Imam Difa (Imam of defence).

accepted the title of Amir al-Muminin offered to him by his followers. [76]

Although it may appear strange at the first sight that while the first Ibadi Imams faced severe opposition, Abd al-Rahman enjoyed a peaceful Imamate. The answer lies in the fact that the former Imams re-established their states in Tripoli, which was on the way to al-Qayrawan, and also en route to al-Andalus, which was under the Umayyads .

Abd al-wahhab b.Abd al-Rahman who succeeded his father in 171/787[77] did not enjoy the peaceful life early during his rule. He faced the opposition of the Nukkaris (deniers),[78] and the Mutazalites المعتزلة which he successfully overcome . [79]

Although up to this time, there seems to be no signs of positive Rustumid rule in Jabal Nafusa, the support and recognition of the Imam of Tahert is beyond any doubt.[80]

Leaving his son Aflah in Tahert Abd al-Wahhab began his pilgrimage trip to Mecca in 190/806 .

On his way he visited the Jabal Nafusa and for a while stayed in Wighu[81] as a guest of Abu Mahdi al-Wighawi. He proceeded to Sharwas where the people asked him not to continue his trip arguing that he would not be safe if he tried to pass through Abbasid territory. Agreeing to seek the advice of the learned Ibadis in the East he remained in Miri,[82] south east of Jadu, devoting his time to the discussion of religious problems.The Ibadis in the east

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(76) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 139 .

(77) Abu Dabbuz, op . cit , p . 455 ; cf . C.E . Bosworth , The Islamic Dynasties , Edinburgh , 1967 , p . 22 .

(78) The Nukkaris are those who objected to the Imamate of Abd al-Wahhab , arguing that he was not suitable for the position . See Abu Dabbuz , op . cit , pp . 474-8 . Abu Zakariyya, Chronique d Abou Zakaria ed . E.Masqueray Algeria 1878 , pp . 57-67 . Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , pp . 154-5 .

(79) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , pp . 154-8 . Abu Rabi al-Baruni , op . cit , p . 34 .

(80) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , pp . 154-5 .

(81) Wighu is an old , deserted town , west of Sharwas . Some of its old building , including a mosque , still survive .

(82) Miri is an old village South-East of Jadu . The only surviving building on the site is the famous mosque of the Rustummid Imam , Abd al-Wahhab .

advised him to abandon the idea of performing a pilgrimage, and he resided in the Jabal .

The Hawwara tribe . settled in a large area covering the north and north east of Jabal Nafusa, rebelled against the Aghlabid governor in Tripoli in 196/811.Against this, the Aghabid ruler, Ibrahim b.al-Aghlab, sent a large army with his son Abd Allah in charge. The Hawwaris realizing that they could not resist this army sent for the help of Abd al-Wahhab. The Ibadi Imam responded favorably by immediately joining the Hawwaries outside the wall of Tripoli.(83)

It was Abd Allah b.al-Aghlab who, this time, foresaw the impossibility of a victory and took refuge in Tripoli. Abd al-Wahhab besieged the city until the death of Ibbrahim b.al-Aghlab in the same year, which allowed Abd Allah no alternative but to come to an agreement with the Imam .Finally he consented to a solution under which the entire area, from Sirt in the east to the south of Safaqis, in Tunisia, would belong to the Rustumids and the remainder, that is, the city of Tripoli and the sea to the Aghlabids.(84)

Not long after this agreement the Imam decided to leave Jabal Nafusa for Tahert. The inhabitants of Nafusa proposed the Imam's Wazir al-Samh b.al-Khattab for the governorship of their region, which was accepted by the Imam.(85) He is to be regarded as the first Rustumid governor in Jabal Nafusa. At al-Samh's death the people elected his son Khalaf without consulting with the Imam beforehand .

Others, not satisfied with the procedure of election sought the Imam's opinion. Abd al-Wahhab finally concluded that the new governor was not suitable for the position of leadership, and

(83) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 161 . Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol , VI , p . 188 ; cf . Ibn Khaldun , al-Ibar , vol . VI , p . 121 .

(84) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 161 . Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol . VI , p . 188; cf . Ibn Khaldun , al-Ibar , vol . VI , p . 121 .

(85) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 161 . See also Abu Zakariyya , Chronique , pp . 128-9 .

appointed Abu al-Hasan b.al-Abbas instead.[86] He died shortly afterwards and succeeded by Abu Ubayd Abd al-Hamid al-Jannawni who fought the Khalfis, but it was al-Abbas b.Ayyub, his successor, who put an end to Khalf himself in the eastern part of the Jabal . [87]

Abd al-Wahhab died in 211/826 without appointing a successor . His followers, however, turned to his experienced, educated , and well-Known son, Aflah, and elected him for the Imamate.[88] His time is regarded as the golden age of the dynasty. Shortly before his death Aflah appointed Abu dhar Iban b . Wasim as governor of Jabal Nafusa . His rule did not last longer than 7 months. [89]

Aflah died in 240/854 leaving behind four sons: Yaqub Muhammad, Abu Bakr, and al-Yaqzan, the last mentioned being the eldest and the most suitable of the four for the Imamate .

He was, however,in prison in Baghdad.It was Decided, therefore, to elect Abu-Bakr hoping that, should he be released , he would partake in the running of the state affairs.[90] Shortly after al-Yaqzan was released and returned to Tahert, the Rustumid capital experienced some disturbances, in which the Imam Abu-Bakr was killed in 241/855.Since the rest of the Ibadis refused to take sides in the struggle existing in the capital, Muhammad b. Masala, the prince of Hawwara castle, which lies to the north of Tahert, seized the opportunity and occupied the city in the same year. Once al-Yaqzan was confirmed as the new Imam he besieged the capital with the help of his supporters, now including Nafusa troops. It seems that Masal's intention behind the occupation was to keep peace and order. for he now agreed with the delegation of Nafusa, appointed by al-Yaqzan, to leave Tahert.[91]

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(86) Al-Shammaki , al-Siyar , pp . 180-1 .
(87) Ibid , pp . 196-7 .
(88) Abu Dabbuz , op . cit , p . 527; cf . Bosworth op . cit , p . 22 .
(89) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , pp . 215-7 .
(90) Abu Rabi al-Baruni ,op .cit,p.39.Abu Dabbuz,op.cit, p.562.Abu Zakariyya, Chronique, pp. 185-6 .
(91) Abu Rabi al-Baruni , op . cit, p . 39. Abu Dabbuz , op . cit , pp. 584-5.

After his father's death in 281/894 Abu Hatim Yusuf b.al-Yaqzan took over the Imamate. His refusal to hear the consultative committee's view angered his brother, Yaqub b.Aflah. himself a member of the committee .

He left Tahert for Zawagha , but the trouble began as soon as Yaqub, at the request of some of the citizens, returned to Tahert. The people split into two opposite groups each supporting one brother.The opposition continued until Yaqub al-Mazati accompanied by his people came to Tahert from the Awras Mountains,and acted as a mediator. An agreement was, therefore, reached to the effect that both Imams should resign, giving another chance to the people to choose their Imam as they wished. The terms of the agreement were carried out, and as a result Tahert elected Abu Hatim after remaining without an Imam for a period of four months.[(92)] Meanwhile Abu Mansur al-Yas governed the Jabal Nafusa and Tripoli area . He is thought of as one of the most outstanding figures in the area time. He gained his reputation because of his vast knowledge and bravery.

In Egypt, taking advantage of his father's absence, al-Abbas b.Tulun began to move with a large army towards al-Maghrib intending to create a new independent dynasty.[(93)]

Ibn Quhrub, the Aghlabid governor in Tripoli, failed to stop the Tulunid army and retreated to the city. Having entered Libda (Leptis Magna), Abu al-Abbas sent a letter to Abu Mansur al-Yas ordering him to surrender, As the territories outside Tripoli belonged to the Rustumids, Abu Mansur considered the invasion as a violation of his rights to his lands. In bloody battle near Qasr Hatim, east of Tripoli, between the Ibadis of Nafusa and the Tulunids, al-Abbas was defeated, but managed to escape.[(94)] Abu Mansur prevented his men from taking the booty of the defeated, for he considered them Muslim. It was for this reason,

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[(92)] Abu Dabbuz , op . cit , pp .584-5 .

[(93)] Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 225 . Ibn Idhari , al-Bayan , vol. I , p . 118. See also Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol . VII , p . 224 .

[(94)] Al-Shmmakhi , al-Siyar , p . 225 . Ibn Idhari , al-Bayan , vol . I , pp. 118-9 .

when the Aghlabid army arrived from Tunisia, they found everything intact and took whatever was of any worth.[95]

Another event to be mentioned is the defiance of Khalaf's son, who was chased by Abu Mansur from Jabal Nafusa to Jerba, in Tunisia. He was there captured, but released after his foot was mutilated.Shortly afterwards he gave up his Khalfid beliefs.[96]

Aflah b . al-Abbas succeeded Abu Mansur and became the governor of Nafusa for the second time.Soon after in 283/896, Ibrahim b.Ahmad b.al-Aghlab gathered a large army intending to invade Egypt, but was intercepted by the Ibadis of Nafusa near Qasr Manu, not far from Sabratha . The battle ended in heavy losses for the Nafusa . Many of their best fighters and learned people were killed.[97] Aflah, however, managed to return to the Jabal, where the angered people compelled him to resing. At first he resisted,but having consulted with Abu Maruf, the governor of Sharwas, agreed to do so.[98] But before long he was again offered the governorship, and became the ruler of the Nafusa area for the third time .

The Imam Abu Hatim was killed in the year 294/907. Upon his death his brother took over the Imamate, in spite of the fact that his son was responsible for the murder of his uncle.[99]

The Rustumid dynasty met its end when the Fatimids entered Tahert in 296/909 .[100]

After the extinction of the Rustumid dynasty Jabal Nafusa remained independent from any outside rule. Many attempts to establish such rule failed. It was only in XVI century A.D, that the Jabal was attached to the Turkish Emire.

The responsibility of appointing suitable governors in the Jabal Nafusa rested with the learned and wise men of Ibadis,

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(95) Al-Shammakhi , alSiyar , p . 95 ; cf . Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol . VII , p 225 .
(96) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , pp . 224-5 . Abu Rabi al-Baruni , op . cit , pp . 42-3 .
(97) Al-Shammakhi , al-siyar , pp . 267-70 . Ibn Idhari , al-Bayan , vol . I , p . 129 .
(98) Ali Muammar , op . cit , part II , p . 130 .
(99) Abu Dabbuz , op . cit , p . 609 .
(100) Ibn Idhari , al-Bayan , vol . I , p . 197 .

(Shaykhs). Occasionally they appointed more than one to rule in different parts of Jabal.

Not much information about Ibadi history, and in particular the period after the fall of the Rustummids, is provided by the non-Ibadi sources. The Ibadi sources lack any information of a detailed chronological kind about those who ruled in the area .

With this in mind, we shall attempt to give an account, albeit briefly, of the more famous rulers, and historical events of some importance in the following pages .

It seems that , the governor of Nafusa, Aflah b.al-Abbas died shortly after the Fatimid invasion of Tahert in 296/909 . Since most of the more suitable men to rule were killed in the battle of Manu , as was mentioned above, the Shaykhs reluctantly appointed Muhammad Abd Allah b.al-Khayr as a defenc Imam. Beside this responsibility, he devoted some of his time to teaching.(101) He was succeeded by Abu Yahya Zakariyya al-Arajani,(112) in early years of the 4th century/10th century .

It was during his rule that the Fatimid Caliph Ubayd Allah sent his troops to Jabal Nafusa, but they were defeated near al-Jazira, in the valley of Sharwas. The Fatimid second attack, this time further west, at the town of Tarikt,(103) also failed . At the end of the second battle Abu Yahya was stabbed to death by one of his friends. According to Ibn Idhari , this fighting happened in the year 310/922, but he mentions one Abu Batta as the Ibadi leader.(104)

Abu Abd Allah Abi Amr b.Mansur al-Yas was then elected, but soon had to resign at the request of his followers. the next one to be elected was Abu Zakariyya Abu Yahya al-Arajani, who defeated the Abbasid army,(105) attacking the Jabal. As in the case of his father, on his way back to the town of Jadu he was stabbed to death by one of his men. Before his death, at the request

(101) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , pp . 236-7 . Ali Muammar , op . cit , part II , pp . 147-50 .

(112) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 243 . Ali Muammar , op . cit , part II . pp . 151-2 .

(103) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 243 . Tirakt is an old village about 42km . west of Kabaw .

(104) Ibn Idhari , al-Bayan , p . 187 .

(105) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 244 . Ali Muammar , op . cit , part II , p . 155 .

of his companion, he suggested Zayd b.Ufsit al-Darafi for the governorship. But after his death people offered the position to Abu Abd Allah Abi Amr who accepting the offer said :

لولا أن أكون كمن قتل نفوسة مرة أخرى ما رجعت في أموركم .

"Had it not been for the fear of being regarded as someone who killed Nafusa for the second time, I would not have taken charge of your affairs."[106]

During his rule Abu Khazar [107] prepared himself, in order to revolt against the Fatimids. As part of his preparation he sent his friend Abu Nuh to encourage the inhabitants of Jabal Nafusa to participate. Abu Abd Allah consulted his people, but it was concluded that because of heavy losses received in the battle of Manu they were not in a position to open a new war. They expressed the hope, however, to help when convenient .

Abu-Zakariyya, the son of the governor of Jabal Nafusa, is spoken of as one of the most learned in the area . He was elected to rule the Jabal Nafusa. His rule lasted some 60 to 70 years, and passed peacefully .[108]

" ولم ترى معه نفوسة نكبة "

During Abu Zakariyya's rule Abu Khazar al-Hammi revolted against the Fatimids,but was defeated, and escaped to Jabal Nafusa. Through the mediation of his influential friend, Abu Nuh, he received the Fatimid Caliph's pardon. Thereupon he left the Jabal for al-Mahdiyya, where he was well received by the Caliph.[109]

In 361/972 the Fatimid Caliph, Abu Tamim, asked Abu Khazar and Abu Nuh to accompany him to Egypt, The former accepted while the latter refused and left for Warjalan;[110] in the south of Algeria .

It appears that during Abu Zakariyya's time, few other people were elected to govern the smaller areas, and to assist him

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(106) Al-Shmmakhi , al-Siyar , p . 318 .
(107) Abu Rabi al-Baruni , op . cit , p . 45 . Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , pp . 349-50 .
(108) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 318 .
(109) Ibid , p . 354 .
(110) Ibid , pp . 354-7 .

in his role as governor general of Jabal Nafusa. Muhammad al-Darfi was one who governed the area of Jadu. Upon his death his son, Abu Yahya Yusuf succeeded him. It was during his time that a group of people from the Zanata attacked the Jabal, and destroyed the village of Adraf.[111]

Abu Yahya b.Matus al-Sharwasi was another governor in Sharwas. He was well-know for his knowledge of religious sciences, and his school (School of Ibn Matus مدرسة ابن ماطوس) which attraced a large number of Ibadi followers at the time .[112]

Contemporary to Abu Yahya was Abd Allah Muhammad b.Jaldasin al-Laluti , who ruled in Lalat .[113] His disciple, Abu Zakariyya Yahya b . Sufyan ruled in the same place .

Abu Zakariyya, the governor general of the Jabal, was requested to name his successor before he died ." I suggest three " he said "Abu Zakariyya al-Laluti, but his defect is living at the far corner of the Jabal, Abu Yaqub al-Baghturi, but his tribe is too disfavoured to be in front, and Isa Abu Dawud Sulayman b.Abi Yahya al-Darfi; should he accept, he is to be preferred." But when Abu Zakariyya died, the Shaykhs appointed Abu Musa Isa Apparently he ruled for a short period , after which the Shaykhs elected Abu Harun Musa b.Harun al-Baruni, who immediately upon his election moved to the village of Abinayan, in the area of Kabaw, in order to be near a very learned woman of the time, named al-Jadda الجدة (the grandmother).[114] In this village he built a mospue and a school.[115]

Turning to the area of Jadu, we hear of Abu Abd Allah b.Muhammad b.Yahya al-Darafi and of his brother Abu Dawud Sulayman, who succeeded him as the ruler of Bani Zammur .[116]

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(111) Ibid , p . 288 .
(112) Ibid , pp . 276-8 . Ali Muammar , op . cit , part II , pp . 157-60 .
(113) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , pp . 328-9 . See also Ali Muammar , op . cit , part II , pp. 173-9 .
(114) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 321 .
(115) Ibid , p . 301 . Abu al-Yaqzan Ibrahim , Sulayman al-Baruni Basha fi Atwar Hayatih, Algeria , 1956 , pp . 9-10 .
(116) Ali Muammar , op . cit , part II , p . 172 . See also al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , pp . 287-8 .

It is very likely that Abu Harun Musa was succeeded by Sulayman al-Tandammirti, but abdicated in favour of Abu Amr Maymun al-Sharwasi. It was during his time that a group of merchants came to the Jabal from the Sudan(117) to sell their commodities. To the governor they offered a gift of 400 Dinars, which he refused, but encouraged the people to bargain with the merchants.(118)

Abu Amr believing that he as the ruler of Muslims carried a heavy responsibility before God , finally resigned .

Abu al-Rabi Sulayman b.Harun al-Baruni is another governor of the Jabal. At one time he was a disciple of Abu Zakariyya al-Laluti, in Lalat. He chose the town of Ibanayan as the centre of his government . His rule ended when he was killed at the age of 27.(119) Towards the end of the IV century/10th century a war broke out between Sharwas which was governed by Abu al-Shata b.al-Baghturiyya and Wighu. governed by Abu Abd Allah (the senior).(120)

Abu Al-fadel Sahal's appointment coincide with some riots in the area. His reputation as a great man is due to his success in bringing peace into Jabal. It appears that he is the only governor to fight the town of Ghadamis, in which he heard of some corruption. In order to protect the inhabitants of Nafusa from the tribe's raid, he also placed warriors in strategically important parts of the Jabal .(121)

At the end of IV century/10th century Abd Allah Muhammad b.Bakr regulated and systematized the tradition of al-Azzaba.(122) This was a system under the Shaykhs of different parts of Nafusa elected their own governors, who had the duty to rule in their own

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(117) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 273 .
(118) Ibid , p . 274 .
(119) Ibid , p . 299 . Ali Muammar , op . cit part II , pp . 193-6. Abu al-Yaqdhan , op . cit , p . 12 .
(120) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 326 .
(121) Ibid , p . 275 . Ali Muammar , op . cit , p . 169 .
(122) For further details see , Muammar , op . cit , part I pp . 97-110 .

areas as well as assisting the governor general of the Jabal, if there was any.

Abd Allah b.Bakr, in fact, gave the sanction of law to the existing tradition, practiced by the Ibadis. Some jurists [123] worked out the details of the new law but Abd Allah is be credited for introducing these laws.

In 361/972 the Fatimid Caliph, al-Muizz designated Bulkin b.Ziri to the governorship of Ifriqiya. The territory under his rule was later extended to Tripoli, Sirt, and Barqah, by the Fatimid Caliph, al-Aziz. Ibn ziri is the founder of the Zirid dynasty which was later to play an important part in the history of al-Maghrib.

At the end of the IV century/10th century the Zirid territories were divided into two parts: Banu Hammad became the rulers of the western part, with Qalat Bani Hammad as its centre, while the Zirids retained Ifriqiya with al-Qayrawan as its capital.[124]

Towards the middle of the V century/11th century al-Muizz b.Badis the Zirid ruler, ended his alliance with the Fatimids, and recognized the authority of the Abbasid Caliph.[125] The Fatimids, in turn, released the two large Arab tribes namely, Banu Hilal and Banu Sulaym, asking them to migrate from lower Egypt to al-Maghrib. The tribes, incited by the Fatimids as to the wealth to be found in al-Maghrib, gradually moved across the countryside, disturbing the peace of the inhabitants on their way.[126] Finally arrived in Ifriqiya, they forced the Zirids to evacuate the city of al-Qayrawan, retreating to al-Mahdiyya.

The Zirids remained in al-Mahdiyya up until the beginning of the VI century A.H when the Normans captured the city, and the Tunisian coast.[127]

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[123] Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, p. 401. Ali Muammar, op. cit, part I, p. 107.

[124] Bosworth, op. cit, pp. 26-7. See also Ibn Khaldun, al-Ibar, vol. VI, pp. 155-67. Abd al-Wahhab, op. cit, p. 105.

[125] Ibn Khaldun, al-Ibar, vol. VI, p. 159. Abd al-Wahhab, op. cit, pp. 111-2.

[126] Ibn Khaldun, al-Ibar, vol. VI, pp. 13-5. Al-Tijani, Rihalat, p. 17.

[127] Ibn Khaldun, al-Ibar, vol. VI, pp. 161-2.

The Norman, in turn, were replaced by al-Muwahhidun الموحدون, who defeated them shortly afterwards, and occupied the whole of the previously Hammadid and Zirid territories.(128)

Although the Arabs, as it has already been pointed out, first came to al-Maghrib as early as the 1st century/7th century, not many of them settled in the area. It is only from the Vth century that we hear of them, inhabiting in large numbers the area from Barqah to al-Qayrawan.(129) Evidently the arrival of the two above mentioned tribes, marked the beginning of the Arabs settlement in Jabal Nafusa.(130)

It has already been mentioned that Abu Mansur al-Yas's family ruled the Jabal for the best part of the IV century . In the proceeding centuries, however, al-Baruni's family succeeded them. The latter resided, at first, in Abinayan, but subsequently moved to Yefrin, in the eastern part of the Jabal. The third Barunid ruler was Abu Zakariyya b.Yahya b.Ibrahim, the most outstanding figure of the first half of the V century A.H.(131) Both of his two sons Abu Abd Allah, and Abu Mansur ruled after him, although the chronology of their reigns cannot be mentioned with any accuracy. What can be said, however, is that they both ruled without facing any riot or disturbances .(132)

Abu Yahya Zakariyya b.Ibrahim al-Baruni was the next governor. He ruled the entire area of Nafusa in the second half of the V century A.H.(133)

As in the case of al-Abbas b.Tulun, Sharaf al-Din Qaraqish,(134) gathered a large army in Egypt in 568/1172,intending to re-establish the Abbasid rule in al-Maghrib. But upon a quarrel

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(128) Abd al-Wahhab , op . cit , p . 121 .

(129) Ibn Khaldun , al-Ibar , vol . VI , pp . 12-72 . Al-Tijani , Rihlat , p . 15 .

(130) See Tahir al-Zawi , Mujam , op . cit , pp . 144-5 . Some stories , in al-Shammakhi's book, show that a small minority of Arabs , as well as Jews , were settling in the Jabal even before the Hilali's invasion . See al-Shammakhi , alSiyar , p . 539 .

(131) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 539 .

(132) Ibid , p . 359 . Cf . al-Yaqdhan , op .cit , p . 18 .

(133) Al-SHammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 546 . Al-Yaqdhan , op . cit , p . 19 .

(134) One of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi's soldiers . See Ibn al-Athir , al-Kamil , vol . XI , pp . 25 , 256 . Al-Tijani , Rihlat , p . 112 .

with his companion , Ibn Qratakin, the latter went along the coast, and was killed in Qafsa, in Tunisia. Qaraqish, on the other hand, moved south to Siwa and then to Zawila, in the south of Libya, where he ended the Bani al-Khattab's rule .[135]

In 582/1186 with the support of Arab tribes, Qaraqish attached Jabal Nafusa and then captured the city of Tripoli.[136] Meanwhile Yahya and Ali, the sons of Ghaniya [137] fought against Almohads, and occupied al-Mahdiyya, Safaqis, and Qabis. To these cities they added the town of Tunis in 586/1191-2.[138] In the same year, al-Mansur, the Almohad Caliph, went to war against Yahya b.Ghaniya and Qaraqish, near al-Hammah, in Tunisia. The two were defeated and escaped to the desert . Al-Mansur occupied Qabis and Tripoli.[139]

Shortly after, however, Qaraqish and Yahya returned, the former captured Tripoli for the second time while the latter occupied al-Qayrawan.[140] Qaraqish was defeated, and escaped to the Jabal and, subsequently, to Waddan .[141]

Ibn Ghaniya tried to capture Jabal Nafusa , but failed in his attempt near the town of Jadu. In his second attempt he chose the town of Sharwas, but was unexpectedly, attacked by the Ibadis in al-Jazira. Yahya saw the impossibility of reaching the town of Sharwas without previously taking al-Jazira. Therefore,he besieged it, but was defeated again.[142] Abu Yahya Zakariyya al-Baruni , the governor of Nafusa, asked for the opinion of the Shaykhs as to

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(135) Al-Tijani , Rihlat , p . 113 .Ibn Khaldun , al-Ibar ,vol . VI , pp . 191-2 . See also al-Zawi , al-Fath al-Arabi , p . 239 .

(136) Al-Tijani , Rihlat , p . 113 . Al-Zawi , al-Fath al-Arabi , p . 240 ; cf . Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil , vol . X , p . 256 .

(137) More information about Banu Ghaniya see , Ibn Khaldun , al-Ibar , vol . VI , pp . 190-1 .

(138) Al-Zawi , al-Fath al-Arabi , pp . 238-9 .

(139) bn Khaldun , al-Ibar , vol . VI , pp . 238-9 .

(140) Ibid , p . 193 . Al-Tijani , Rihlat , pp . 104-5 . Abd al-Wahhab , op . cit , p . 123 .

(141) Al-Tijani , Rihlat , pp . 244-6 .

(142) Ali Muammar , op . cit , part II , pp . 200-1 . Abu Rabi , op . cit , p . 49 . AlShammakhi , al-Siyar, p. 547 . Al-Yaqzan , op . cit , pp . 20-2 . Cf . al-Tijani , Rihlat, pp . 244 , 356 .

what should be done about the booty . By consensus they suggested that it be burnt , so he did .[143]

The history of the Nafusa speaks of this governor as a great ruler . He succeeded in convincing the other Ibadis in the area of Nafusa to adopt al-Wahbi school of thought .[144] He was a learned jurist . His gifts which reached almost every house in the area of Nafusa , is an indication of his wealth and generosity .[145]

It has been said that the people of the Jabal conferred the title of Amir al-Muminin upon him .[146] His nephew , Abu Nasr al-Tamlushayti , reputed for his vast knowledge of religious sciences , was a disciple of Abu Yahya Zakariyya .

Al-Shammakhi [147] speaks of Abu Zakariyya b. Abi Yahya who might have governed in the Jabal area . Therefore , it can be said that Abu Yahya might have died in the first half of the VII century A.H.Abu Zakariyya is described as the head of Halaqa, a group of learned people who toured the area of the Jabal teaching Islam .

In the year 625/1228 Abu Zakariyya Yahya b.Abd al-Wahid, the governor of Ifriqiya, rebelled against Almohads, establishing the Hafsid dynasty.Accordingly, Tripoli became part of his territory.[148] But the fact that we hear of a governor in the Jabal as late as the VIIth century supports the assertion that this area remained independent from the new dynasty. This governor was al-Shaykh b. Ibrahim b. Abi Yahya al-Baruni, a disciple of Isa b. Isa al-Tarmisi . They both died in 722/1322 .[149]

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(143) Ali Muammar , op .cit , p . 201 . Al-Yaqdhan , op . cit , p . 22 . See also al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 547 .

(144) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 546 . This school of thought was called after the Rustumid Imam , Abd al-Wahhab b. Rustum . Its followers were called al-Wahbis , but they should have been called al-Wahhabis .

(145) Ibid , pp . 546-7 .

(146) Ali Muammar , op . cit , p . 197 .

(147) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 554 .

(148) Rossi , op . cit , pp . 69-70 . Abd al-Wahhab , op . cit , p . 128 .

(149) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 554 .

Al-Shammakhi[150] tells us that during the time of this governor a war broke out between the Arabs and the Ibadis in the area of Farsatta .[151] This tends to show that there were at least Arabs in minority settled in the area of Jabal Nafusa , as early as the first half of the VIII century A.H .

From the second half of the VIII century A.H . one may observe the decline of the Ibadi authority in the Jabal Nafusa. Although the Ibadis retained their loyalty to the Shayhs, the increase of the power of the Arabs, as well as the outsiders, becomes more and more evident. No longer were the Shaykhs in a position to appoint a governor general . The Ibadis, however, elected their rulers in their districts, although they were not unaware of the foreign influences upon themselves .[152]

Tripoli itself changed hands many time until 916/1510 when it was occupied by the Spanish .[153] The Spanish rule did not bring any deep change in the affairs of the Jabal , since they confined their occupation within the city's boundaries . So did , indeed , the Knights of Malta , who were given the city in 937/1530 .[154] Towards the middle of the XVIth century A.D . Draqut Basha occupied Jerba , al-Mahdiyya , and the town of Tunisia .[155] Abu Sulayman Dwud b. Ibrahim , one of Ibadi leaders , with his delegation, met Draqut in the town of Jerba . He was questioned about some riots which had taken place during Draqut's absence . Apparently his reasoning that the Shaykhs no longer had any authority to appoint or dismiss a governor was not accepted . He was imprisoned and died in 967/1560 .[156]

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(150) Ibid , p . 558 . See also al-Yaqdhan , op . cit , pp . 26-7 .

(151) Farsatta is an old village , built on hillside , east of Kabaw . Since it has been deserted recently , most of its building are still preserved .

(152) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , pp . 569-70 . See Ibn Khaldun , al-Ibar , vol . VI , p . 277 .

(153) Rossi , op . cit , pp . 111-2 .

(154) Ibid , p . 127 ; cf . al-Zawi , al-Fath al-Arabi , p . 283 .

(155) Rossi , op . cit , p . 137 .

(156) This story is mentioned by Muhammad B.Zakariyya al-Baruni , in the appendix to al-Shammakhi's book , al-Siyar , pp . 174-6 .

In the year 958/1552 the Turks occupied Tripoli . Having defeated the Knights of Malta . Jabal Nafusa became a part of the Turkish Empire .[157] Throughout the Turkish occupation Jabal Nafusa was ruled by governors appinted by the Turkish governor general in Tripoli .

At the beginning of the XXth century , 1912 to be more precise , the Italians , having defeated the Turks , occupied Tripoli . During their rule , which lasted for a period of 31 years , a civil war between the Ibadis , in Jabal Nafusa , and the Arabs resulted in heavy losses . Thousands of important manuscrips were also destroyed .[158]

During the second world war and after the defeat of the Italians by the Allies in 1943 A.D . Libya was temporarily put under the protection of British and French , the former in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica and latter in the Fezzan .

Finally on December 24 , 1951 A.D . Libya proclaimed her independence as a sovereign state . A revolution broke out on the first of September 1969 .

The governors of Jabal Nafusa during the Rustumid Dynasty

Al-Samh b. al-Khattab (The Imam Abd al-Wahhab) .
Khalf b. al-Samh .
Abu al-Hasan b. al-Abbas .
Abu Ubyda al-Jannawni .
Al-Abbas b. Ayyub (The Imam Aflh) .
Abu Masur al-Yas (The Imam Abu–alyaqdhan, Abu Hatim) .
Aflh b. al-Abbas (2) .
Aflah b. al-Abbas (3) .

The governors of Jabal Nafusa from the end of the Rustumid Dynasty up to the end of the IV century A.H . /10th A.D .

Aflah b. al-Abbas .
Muhammad b. Abi al-Khayr .
Abu Yhya al-Arajani .

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(157) Ali Muammar , op . cit , part II , p . 145 .
(158) Al-Yaqdhan , op . cit , pp . 174-6 .

Abu Abd Allah Abi Amr Mnsur al-Yas .
Abu Zakariyya Yahya al-Arajani .
Abu Abd Allah Mnsur al-Yas .
Abu Zakariyya Abi Abd Allah .

Lalt
Abu Abd Allah
Jaldasin
Abu Zakariyya Yahya

Sharwas
Abu Yahya
Matus

Jadu
Muhammad al-Darafi

Abu Musa Isa

Abu Yahya Yusuf

Abu Harun Musa

Banu Zammur

Wighu
Abu Abd Allah (the senior)
Abu Abd Allah

Abu Abd Allah
Abu Dawud

Abu al-Shata

Sulayman al-Tandammirti
Abu Amr al-Shrwasi

The governors of Nafusa from the end of the IV century A.H . up till the middle of the VIII century A.H .

Abu al-Rabi Sulayman al-Baruni .
Abu al-Fadl Sahl .
Abu Zakariyya Yahya al-Baruni .
Abu Abd Allah al-Baruni .
Abu Mnsur al-Baruni .
Abu Yahya Zakariyya Ibrahim al-Baruni .
Zakariyya Yahya al-Baruni (al-Shykh , died in 722 A.H) .

II
NALUT - KABAW

CHARTER II

NALUT - KABAW

The old town of Nalut - The Qasr - the upper mosque .
The old town of Kabaw - the storehouse .
The mosqe of Tnumayat - the mosque of Abnayan .

As far as Arabic historical books are concerned there is very little to be found dealing with the area of Jabal Nafusa . One has to rely on Ibadi sources to have some information . In the field of geography this area has not come under serious study . Because of this lack of information usually available in other areas , it seems that material gathered from field work in the Jabal has to provide us with the primary source of knowledge to establish the foundation for further study .

Nalut lies about 285 km to the south west of Tripoli . it is situated on a hill between two valleys overlooking the long valley of Nalut to the west . In the middle of the town , at the top of the hill , is the storehouse , which is the dominant feature of the old town . (See figs.1,2) .

Nearby just to the north east of the storehouse , about 15m . lies al-Masjid Ala المسجد الأعلى (the upper mosque).To the north east of this, and on a lower level, lies another mosque al-Masjid al-Luti (the lower mosque). The latter, although it is deserted and partly collapsed , still retains important architectural features .

The building which is thought to have been the courthouse of Nalut is situated a few meters to the south east of the storehouse. (See fig .3).

The four important building mentioned are surrounded by houses . These houses are attached to each other but are penetrated by small winding streets . Today old Nalut is almost deserted . (See fig . 4) Most of the population moved to the new town of Nalut, wich lies nearby to the south west .

Mondadori describes Nalut as follows:

Nalut is surrounded by hills which were once subjected to volacanic eruption. These hills consist mainly of layers of light brown limestone. It can also be noticed that there are different kinds of rock with varying colours, lying horizontally in layers, and separated from each other by a few meters. Due to natural conditions the top layers became hard whilst the lower levels were affected by corrosion . The corrosion resulted in the formation of gorges and the uncovering of some springs , the tops of some of these hills have a flat surface upon which small villages were founded .[(159)]

Mondadori tells us that the village of Nalut reminds us of the Tibetan villages . He also stated that the position of Nalut on the top of the hill , Functioned as a fort to protect the inhabitants from the Arabic conquest as well as to protect them from their neighbours . He also mentioned that these villages in the area of Nalut date from the 6th century A.D .

Mondadori explains the existence of several other villages in this area as being extensions or "daughter" villages of their originals . Another reason was to find a higher and better position which was nearer to water sources .[(160)] He also claims that this extension took place in three stages which were separated by a period of four centuries .[(161)]

C.Motylinski hardly said anything about geography of Nalut. He stated that Nalut is situated on the eastern side of a hill.Below this hill,towards the east,there are a few water springs and a gorge,which used by the people to water only their sheep. Another spring called Taghlis was used by the inhabitants for their own needs.In the valley not far from Nalut, towards the west,there are olive and plam trees extending for about 10 miles .[(162)]

[(159)] A.Mondadori , Itineraire Tripolis Ghudames , Verona , 1939 , p . 38 .
[(160)] Ibid , p . 40 .
[(161)] Ibid , p . 40 .
[(162)] A.De calassanti Motylinski ,

T.Lewicki states that Nalut district is the biggest within the Jabal . It represented a transit centre between Tripoli and Sabra . He stresses its importance because of its position between Sabrath (Zwagha) and Cydamus (Ghudames). He states that the word Tlis (Taghlis) is not an African, Latin Berber word. Iglis derives from the Latin Icclasia. This word shows a Christian presence there. Lewicki mentions that Lalut found itself as a ruling place for the first half of the 3rd/9th century, when al-Abbas b.Ayyub governed Jabal Nafusa under the Rustumids. In this period Nalut was a learning centre . Very little is known about its history but what is better know is the period of the 4th/10th century. At that time Jabal Nafusa was divided into small independent areas . Nalut was run by an independent governor , as happened in Sharwas and Jadu . Nalut is considered to be the furthest point of Jabal Nafusa towards the west .(163)

Al-Shammakhi does not talk about the history of Nalut as such , but he mentions it from time to time as the town of learned people and religious sciences, where some distinguished people of Nafusa have come from. He mentions it as Lalat and never once as Nalut .(164) Ali Muammur describes only the valley of Nalut. He tells us that it is a fertile one full of trees . He states that this town has a long Islamic history, but he does not give any details. He also names the water sources of Nalut and to him Taghlis spring had the sweetest water .(165) Motylinski states that there were 1,600 Berber Ibadi houses in Nalut . Within these buildings there was a small Qasr .(166) This Qasr had 3,00 "shops" where people stored their goods. Every afternoon they would open their shops and take whatever needed , whether for their families or their animals .Some of them would give their goods to the Dallal دلال , the auctioneer, to

(163) T.Lewicki , Etudes Ibadites nord Africanes , partie I Tasmiya Suyuh Gabal Nafua wa Qurahum , Warszovu , 1955 , pp , 125-6 .
(164) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , pp . 197 , 298 , 313 , 399 .
(165) See , Ali Muammar , Mawkib , op . cit , III , p . 171 .
(166) Qasr means a palace in Arabic . In Nafusa area this word means s storehouse as the whole village .

be sold. Below this Qasr there was the big mosque which was used by people who were living at the top of the town . Below that there was al-Azzaba road , and beyond that there was a new mosque. In the whole of Nafusa area there was no other Qasr biger than the one of Nalut .[167]

R.Basset repeats the same information but he adds that there were four mosques . One of these was the one used by the people living at the top of the hill . Another was the new mosque which was in front of al-Azzaba's mosque , and Sidi Khlifa's mosque .[168]

THE STOREHOUSE :

The central point of Nalut is occupied by a rectangular shaped storehouse which has the appearance of a fort , but with small holes on the outside wall . (See fig . 5).

Not very much has been written about this storehouse. Mondadori , however , tells us that this storehouse looks like a fort from the outside , but from the inside this idea will change to give the impression of a storehouse . In describing it he says "there are no stairways to the rooms but there are pieces of wood stuck into the wall leading to about 300 small rooms built on five or six storeys . Each room measures 1m . high by 1m . wide by 1m . long. These rooms were used as storage places by the inhabitants of Nalut" He also mentions that each room would store corn , wheat and olive oil which was adequate for a Berber family for a year .

A man acted as a guard for the storehouse , and even without that guard , no-one would think of stealing his neighbour's storage . Despite the narrowness of the passageways of the storehouse, markets were held there. This Qasr evolved into a fortified market, since the day when the Berbers saw themselves reluctantly giving in to the conquerors.On this day Nalut was no longer a Berber village. Before this period, this Qasr wasfunctioning as a fort

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(167) See Motylinski op . cit , p . 107. See also , J . Despois , Le Djebel Nefousa ,Paris/Tunisia, 1935 , pp . 234-6 .

(168) R.Basset , Les Sanctuaires du Djebel Nafousa in Journal Asiatique , vol . XIII , p . 437 .

associated with lots of myths .[169] Mondadori dates the building back to the Roman or Byzantine era .[170]

Today the storehouse is in good condition . Its only entrance point is on the north eastern side , which measures 1.10m . in width and about 2.10m . in height . This access point is a small rectangular passage , measuring 3.43m . in length with a stone deck on each side . In the centre of this complex there is another building , which rises higher than the outer wall . The inner building is surrounded by a narrow passageway of about 1.70m . in width . Both the inner building and the outer wall consist of storage rooms , all overlooking the passageway . In some parts there are six storeys of rooms and in other parts only five . (See fig . 6).

The most striking feature of this kind of storehouse is that there appears to have been no stairway to the storage rooms. There are, however, short wooden saients built into the walls and these were and still are the means of climbing up to the rooms. One person would climb up to the entrance and then place planks across two of these pieces of wood jutting out from the base of each entrance. He then would be able to stand here and pull the load up by rope. The rooms of the storehouse have a rectangular shape measuring on average 1.90m. in length by 1.65m. in width by 1.75m. in height. Inside most rooms there were found large unglazed pottery jars.They would have contained olive oil. Since the size of the jars is much larger than the size of the entrance, which measures on average 1.10m. high by 85cm. wide,one could assume that the jars were placed there before the entrance of each room was built. Each of the rooms has a barrel vault ceiling and a wooden door (See figs. 7,8). Ventilation holes are provided in each room, and some of them can be seen on the outside of the storehouse wall. The whole complex was built of stone; clay and gypsum were used to make the mortar. The Nalut storehouse is

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(169) A.Monddori , op . cit , p.p .41-3 .

(170) Ibid , p.43 .cf , Islamic Art and Architecture in Libya . London , 1976 , p . 42 .

typical of those scattered throughout different parts of Jabal Nafusa .

As far as historical accounts are concerned , nothing was mentioned about the date of establishment of this building . The lack of evidence in inscriptions and the fact thet it has been restored several times , makes it very difficult to date .

It seems that Nalut, during the Roman time, was an important place due to its position.[171] This does not necessarily make us accept Mondadori's theory which dates this building to the Roman or the Byzantine period. Mondadori, however, does not base his dating on any evidence .

What can be said at this stage , according to information that we possess , is that the storehouse did exist before the arrival of the Turks in Jabal Nafusa .[172] That is to say that this building was standing in the 9th / 15th .

THE UPPER MOSQUE :

This mosque is known as al-Masjid al-Fuqi , the upper mosque . It lies about 15m to the east of the Qasr . Although it is mentioned by some writers that have been quoted above, none of them have given any details.

The upper mosque has an almost square shape in which the qibla wall is about 7.90m. while the north east wall measures 9.05m. and the south west wall is 8.80m. It is noticeable that the west wall is less well shaped than the others . The width of the entrance of the mosque, which is on the north east side , is about 80cm. wide and its height is about 1.90m. (See figs. 9,10) The average thickness of the walls is about 70cm.(See ground plan fig.11) .

The mosque as it is consists of four aisles, riwaqs , covered with barrel vaults . It seems that the north east riwaq was used by women since there is partition separating it from the other three .

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(171) R.Goodchild , Roman roads in Libya and their mile stones , Libya , 1968 , p . 158 .
(172) See , al-Zawe , Mujam , op . cit , p . 271 .

There is a trace of an entrance on the north west wall which probably was used to enter the women's section . After careful examination of this wall it seems quite likely that there was another riwaq extending the mosque to north west . The mihrab of this mosque is so simple and it lacks any kind of decoration .It is orientated approximately south , south east . (See fig .12).
This type of nich is common in the mosques of the Jabal . A stone deck which takes up all the south west corner is a characteristic of this mosque (See fig .13). It extends from the qibla wall to the third riwaq towards the north west . Its average height is about 35cm . It appears that it functioned as a place for Quran teaching . Having this deck then would leave enough room for people to pray.

There is an old tree trunk lying by the south west wall, opposite to the entrance of the mosque . (See fig .14) . This tree trunk ends at a small hole in the wall . It seems that it had no function , but people look upon it as a venerated object . The hole which is blocked up , may have led to the roof .

On the roof , directly above the entrance there is a small dome . On the top of it there are small stones forming the shape of three short columns (See fig .9) . This architectural feature is know in the Jabal as Suma . Though this name in Arabic means a minaret, in Jabal Nafusa , it seems Suma functioned only to indicate the position of a mosque or another important building . The call for prayer must have been done , as it is today , outside the mosque . There is a possibility that it was carried out on the roof .

This mosque is still in use and therefore is in good repair . It is a plain building , as are many other mosques in the Jabal . It contains no decoration , but it has an inscription on the ceiling due to very recent restoration . The mosque , as other building in old Nalut , is made from rough stones . This whitewashed mosque is visibly distinct between the ruins of the town . None of the other buildings apear to have ever been whitewashed on the outside (See fig .15) .

The upper mosque with its simple architecture and design reminds us very much of early Islamic buildings .[173] But this resemblance is no help in even guessing an approximate date for this mosque . Al-Shammakhi , however , gave us a clue when he mentioned the venerated tree trunk in Lalat .[174] If we thought that this old trunk in the mosque has not been moved from somewhere else , we could assume that the upper mosque did exist during the 9th / 15th century . It seems that this mosque is much older but making a commitment based upon what has been found , would definitely lack evidence .

KABAW :

This town is situated around the summit of hill , overlooking the valley of Akrayan about 84km to the east of Nalut . Most of the old building of this town have collapsed , but some of them have recently been restored . The storehouse is the prominent and focal point of the town (See fig .17) .

Very little has been written about Kabaw and the information that we do possess does not go into details. Mondadori, for example , describes Kabaw as a village which has a Qasr containing many small rooms . They were used by families to store their belongings. He said that this storehouse gives us a preliminary idea about the one in Nalut .[175]

Lewicki states that Kabaw was an ancient place which existed during the Roman period . He also said that the French traveler, H.Duneryrien mentioned that there was a Roman building in Kabaw, Lewicki, however, doubts the existence of such a building in the very town .[176]

Motylinski tells us that this Qasr (meaning the village of Kabaw) is the biggest OF AL-Haraba area. He also stated that Kabaw consisted of about 500 houses and two mosques. One of

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(173) K.A.C . Creswell , Early Muslim Architecture , G.B.1958 . p . 37 .
(174) A-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p . 545 .
(175) Mondadori , op . cit , p. 37 .
(176) T.Lewicki , op . cit , p. 64 .

them was excavated underground. He also mentioned that Kabaw overlooked a valley full of olive and fig trees.[177]

The round shaped storehouse in Kabaw is similar to the one in Nalut. The main difference is that the Kabaw storehouse has no building in the middle. The centre is occupied by a small building of a tomb. The Kabaw storehouse is also more preserved and of a better design than the one in Nalut. Kabaw, in fact, is similar to Nalut almost in every way except that it is smaller in size .

TNUMAYAT :

To the west of Kabaw some 32km, lie the ruins of Tnumayat. Today it is better known to the people of the area as al-Khirba, (the ruin) (See fig .18) .

Motylinski when writing about al-Khirba said "to the west of Tirekit[178] there is a Qasr El-Khirbat in which there are 12Berber Ibadi families". He also mentioned that it is situated on a mound. To south there is a gorge from which the inhabitants get their water. The crops are olives and figs .[179]

Today nothing could be seen standing except for a few semi-collapsed buildings in addition to the underground mosque. About 700m. to the west of the mosque lie the ruins which appear to be those of a storehouse . It is obvious , from what is left on the site , that Tnumayat was just a small village .

THE MOSQUE OF TNUMAYAT :

The mosque , which lies in the centre of the ruins , is also known as the mosque of Sidi Mhemmed .[180] Its beautiful design

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(177) See,Motylinski, op. cit , p.106.

(178) Tireket is small village almost buried with sand today. It lies about 7km to the west of Tnumayat .

(179) See, Motylinski, op . cit , p.106 .

(180) There is no historical evidence upon which this mosque could be related to Sidi Hinid . From talking to the people in the area one could assume that he was one of those learned people who taught in the mosque . This man could have acted as an Imam , hence the mosque was called after him .

and decorative features make this mosque one of the most noticeable in the Jabal .

Ali-Muammur mentioned this mosque as one of the distinquished ones in the area of Jabal Nafusa. He based this importance on its elaborate decoration as well as the inscriptions which he said covered the mihrab and the ceiling .[181] No inscriptions were found when it was visited, either on the mihrab or on the ceiling.The only inscription is the one on the entrance .[182]

The mosque has a rectangular shape with a smaller rectangular room on the north west wall. (See ground plan fig .19) The length of the qibla wall is about 5.80m.while the south west wall is about 7.20m.The north east wall is approximately 6.30m.The entrance, which is on the north west wall, measures about 80cm in width and 1.10m in height . This mosque was carved into a small hill . Its ceiling is one barrel vault which covers the four riwaqs.The ceiling is supported by nine columns. (See figs .20&21) (See also ground plan fig .19) .

The most characteristic feature of this mosque is its architectural uniformity . There are four rows of two columns and they resemble each other. (See figs .22,23). The north east and the south west are identical . For example , a niche in one part of the wall , in one riwaq has its identical niche on the opposite wall (See fig .24) .

As for the mihrab , it is a rectangular plain niche with a semicircular arch , flanked by two small niches for oil lamps. (See figs .20,22). The mihrab is orientated south, south east, having a depth of 1.20 m .

The room near the entrance measures five meters in length and 2.80m in width . Its door, which is 80cm wide , consists of a semicircular arch supported by two columns . In the middle of the room there is another which supports the arches that hold up the roof . On entering the room , the wall to the right has a window

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[181] Ali Muammur , Mawkib , part III , p.177 .
[182] See p.68 .

overlooking the inside of the mosque . The wall facing the entrance has two small niches. (See fig .25) Because of its small size it seems unlikely that it was used for teaching . One may suggest that it was used as a place where some manuscripts and other belonging of the mosque were kept . The ceiling of this room , unlike the ceiling of the mosque , lacks any decoration . Apart from that this room does not correspond , as far as its planning is concerned, with the rest of the mosque. It seems that this room was added some time after the mosque was built .

The relief plaster decoration covering the ceiling and the arches has geometrical patterns as well as plant elements (See figs .26,27). Some shapes present can be interpreted as jewelery (bracelet) (See fig .28). The zigzag lines pattern is predominant throughout the decoration . They appear sometimes in the form of dots (See fig .29). The star shape seems to be another popular motif in the design . In addition to the six pointed star, there are shapes with eight points (See fig .30). There are also some lines which form a row of arches (See fig .27). The plant decoration appears in the form of winding branches which reminds us of Arabisque decoration (See fig .31). The simple motif of the palm leaf appears mainly on the arches and some are scattered throughout the decoration (See fig .32). Only a few examples of a flower with four petals can be seen (See fig .33). The whole decoration seems to be made up of a small number of patterns repeated all over the ceiling .

On the entrance of the mosque there is a round stone. its base measures about 95cm . and its height is about 50cm (See fig .34). This stone bears seven lines of inscription and it reads as follows :

إنما يعمر مساجد الله من آمن بالله واليوم الآخر (قد) افلح المؤمنون الذين هم في
صلاتهم خاشعون وقل رب ادخلني مدخل صدق واخرجني مخرج صدق واجعل لي من
لدنك وليا واجعل لي من لدنك سلطانا نصيرا بنيت في شهر الله رمضان في سنة اربعة
وخمسين واربع مايه وبناها من اراد ثوابه في الدنيا والاخرة .
كتبه عبد الملك بن يعقوب النفوسي .

1) The mosques of God shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in God and the last day .

(Qur . IX , 18)

2) The believers must (eventually) win through. Those who humble themselves in their prayers .

(Qur . XXIII , 1,2)

3) Say "O my lord ! let my entry be the gate of truth and honour, and likewise my exit by the gate of truth and honour, and grant me .

4) From thy presence and authority to aid (me) .

(Qur . XVII , 80)

5) It was built in the month of Ramadan in the year (454) four hundred and fifty four .

6) It was built by he who wanted his reward in this life and in the last day .

7) It was written by Abd al-Malik bin Yaqub al-Nafusi .

So far this is the oldest dated inscription found on a building in Jabal Nafusa . This dated inscription gives the mosque of Tnumuyat a great importance. Now we have evidence in an example of an underground mosque in the Jabal which dates from 454/1062 . Accordingly the design of this building and the style of the decoration could be taken as a criteria when studying other monuments in the Jabal .

About 8km to the north east of Tnumayat there is another small village known as Qasr Sidi Hmid.[183] (See fig .35). It is situated on a hill overlooking the Jafara plain . The most striking building in this village is the storehouse which is surrounded by the ruins of a few houses . This whole complex is bounded to the south by a ditch which extends from east to west about 40m . The average depth of this ditch is about 8m . by 3m wide .(See figs 36,37). The

(183) Today the area of Qasr Sidi Hmid is occupied by an Arab tribe .

storehouse and other buildings can only be reached by getting into the ditch and climbing up the other side . At one time , how ever, a bridge across would have provided access . It is evident that the ditch is a natural rock formation and not man-made . This round shaped storehouse is typical of the one in Kabaw but the chambers in Sidi Hmid are better designed . (See figs .38,39) In addition only two storeys survive in Qasr Sidi Hmid .

ABNAYAN :

The old village of Abnayan is situated at the foot of a hill in the valley of Akrayan. It lies some 12km to the west of Kabaw. None of the old buildings except for two mosques, are in good condition. (See figs.40,41) One of the mosques is considered to be one of the venerated mosques in the Jabal and this could be the reason why it is in good repair. This village was very important during $4^{th}/10^{th}$ century, because it was the residence of Abu-Harun, the governor of Jabal Nafusa .

Lewicki said that according to the work of al-Baruni and al-Shammakhi, this village appears to be an important one. The old mentioning of this village is connected with Abu-Musa b.Harun who built a mosque perhaps in the 4th A.H. This village was still populated when it was visited by al-Farsattai.[184] Lewicki claims that the mosque standing in Abnayan is without any doubt the mosque of Abu Harun . He also said the name Abnayan consists of two words . The first one , which is Arabic, is Ibn (Son). He says that the name of the village, according to his knowledge is connected with Tabuinati (Thabunati). It is a place mentioned in some books lying between Leptis Magna (Lebda) and Thalati (Tatahouine)Lewicki said "He added that perhaps it lies somewhere in the eastern part of Jabal Nafusa. In fact the name Tabuinati (the bunati) is a feminine Libyan Latinized name. The same name

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[184] T . Lewicki , op . cit , pp . 73-4 .

was given to Abnayan , in its masculine form during the Berber time in the middle ages .[185]

Ali-Muammur describing the valley of Akrayan said "From the spring that waters Kabaw the valley extends eastwards till it reaches Abnayan . This town was the home of Abu-Harun and his son Abu al-Rabi as well as the place for a number of distinguished people in the Jabal . It is surrounded by villages which appear to have been the "suburbs" of Abnayan .[186]

Nowadays , Abnayan is a deserted place . Looking at its ruins, one could get the idea that it had a fairly large population . (See fig .42) Traces of a wall can be seen to the west of the village and perhaps this surrounded Abnayan .(See fig .43) The average height of the wall measures about 1m . The wall may even have extended down to the valley , for there is what could be a continuation of it near the mosque but then it disappears . At the northern edge of the village there is another mosque . Although it is in good condition , no decoration nor inscription were found . To the north east the remains of another small village can be seen . Within these remains another plain mosque is still standing in good condition .

THE MOSQUE OF ABNAYAN (THE MOSQUE OF ABU HARUN)

Al-Shammakhi mentions a mosque in Abnayan as Abu Harun's mosque ,[187] but he does not locate its position .[188] This mosque, however, is situated on a slope between the ruins overlooking the valley of Akrayan to the south west . (See fig .44) It has a rectangular plan in which the Qibla wall measures about 10.05m . while the south west wall is 7.25m . The north east wall is about 7.50m . and the north west wall is approximately 9.25m . The mosque consists of four riwaqs covered with barrel vaults . It has

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(185) Ibid . p.74.
(186) Ali Muammar , Mawkib , prt III , p.176.
(187) See above pp .70-I .
(188) Al-Shammakhi , al-Siyar , p.536.

two entrances. The main one is in the north west wall and measures about 85cm in width and about 1.63m in height. The other entrance, which is opposite to the first one, measures about 1.75m in height and some 70cm in width (See fig .45). The small entrance could be the one that was used by woman since there is a wall separating the mosque into two halves. Except for these entrances, there are only four small holes, two in each section, which allawed the passage of air and light. Within the mosque, exactly in the north east corner there is a staircase leading to the roof (See ground plan fig .46). The entrance to the roof has since been blocked up, leaving the stairs to indicate that there was an access to the roof (See fig .47) .

The mihrab, which is semicircular niche, has a depth of 1.35m. Its height measures about 2.27m . while its width is about 82cm.This mihrab, with its well cut stones as well as its decorations and inscriptions, could be considered a unique example in the whole area of Jabal Nafusa.(See fig .48) .

The decoration and inscriptions in the mosque are limited to eight circles flanking the mihrab, four on each side, arranged vertically .

Right,1. Facing the mihrab, the design on the upper right consists of there concentric circles, containing a six-pointed star constructed from two overlapping triangles. The outer circle contains a ring of circles, each with a dot at the centre; the narrower inner ring of circles is hatched diagonally. Within the six-pointed star and between its points are split leaf motifs, resembling courie shells (See fig .49) .

2,below. The design consists of four concentric circles containing a rosette with eight scalloped petals, with spikes between them . The two outer rings contain a reserved inscription in foliated Kufic . It reads:

" شهد الله انه لا اله الا هو والملائكة واولوا العلم قائما بالقسط لا اله الا هو".

" There is no God but he, that is the witness of God his angels, and those endowed with knowledge, standing firm on justice ."

(Qur . III , 18)

Between the next two circles is a ring of dots; and between the innermost circles, a ring of circles with dots at the centre, as in (1) above (See fig.50).

3,below. Again the design consists of four concentric circles containing a rosette with nine scalloped petals. In the next two circles the decorations have been obscured. The outer ring is hatched diagonally. A pattern consists of four leaves occurring five times within the outer ring .(See fig .51).

4.The design here is almost identical to (1) above. The only difference being that the small circles, each with a dot, which form the outer ring, are not surrounded by a line . Apart from that there are also small circles on each corner of the stone on which the decoration is incised . One could also notice here that the star shape was made to look like twelve pointed star (See fig .52) .

LEFT,1. Facing the mihrab the design on the upper left consists of three concentric circles . As far as the decoration is concerned it is identical to the upper right (1). The only difference is that the star here has eight points (See fig .53) .

2,below. The design consists of two concentric circles . The inner one has a cross shape which divides it into four sections . The opposite section have the same decoration ; in two of them plant motif in the form of palm leaves occur . The other two also have plant elements but one of these also has a diagonal shape (See fig .54). The outer ring contains an inscription in plain Kafic. It reads :

" نعمة سابغه بركة كاملة بركة من الله لمن آمن بأمان الله وليه ".

" A great gift, complete blessing, blessing from God to those who believed in the security of God, his supporter ".

3. The design consists of five concentric circles; containing a rosette with eight scalloped petals, with spikes between them. The three outer rings are partly hatched diagonally. As for the

outermost circle it consists of a ring of circles, each with a dot at the centre (See fig .55) .

4. The design consists of three concentric circles, containing a six-pointed star constructed from two over-lapping triangles. It is identical to (1) above (See fig .56).

We know already that Abu-Harun Musa al-Tamlushayti[(189)] moved to Abnayan as soon as he was chosen as a governor of the Jabal. We also know that he was one of the most learned people in Nafusa area during the first half of the 4th / 10th century. According to historical accounts, he built a mosque in Abnayan.[(190)] In addition to that, the standard . of the decoration as well as the style of the Kufic inscriptions, make it very obvious that this mosque dates from the second half of the 4th / 10th century. This mosque again, as the mosque in Tnumayan, stands as an example which helps us in dating other mosques in Jabal Nafusa .

A number of points mentioned above have not been discussed in detail, since other example are needed in order to deal with them fully as well as to come to a sound explanation . These points which follow will be analyzed at length in proceeding chapters .

Some of the mosques mentioned above are partly below ground level. The mosque of Tnumayat however, is completely underground. All the mosques mentioned are covered with vaults. How can we explain the popularity of these architectural features ?

It is very well known that Friday prayer, according to Islam, is not valid without a Minbar from which the Imam presents his speech. The mosques mentioned above, however, do not contain Minbars. Here then the question is; can we explain the reason for the absence of this feature in the old mosques of the Jabal ?

We have seen that in Nalut's mosque there is an opening in the wall. In Abnayan there is a blocked-up opening in the ceiling as

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(189) Tamlushayat is another small village in the Jabal. It lies some 30km to the south east of Kabaw .

(190) See al-Shmmakhi,al-Siyar, p.

a staircase. Had these opening and the staircase something to do with the call for prayer at one time ?

The minaret occurred in Islamic architecture as early as the $1^{st}/7^{th}$ century. Since then it became an essential architectural feature of the mosque. In the mosques mentioned above, there is not even a trace of such a feature. Why did Jabal Nafusa ignore such a popular, if not essential, architectural feature in the early centuries of the Islamic era ? Apart from that, what is the right definition for the word Suma (minaret) in the Jabal, and what is its real function ?

The Mihrab, as a place to indicate the direction of Mecca, was emphasized in most of the mosques by muslim architects and artists all over the Islamic world. Except for Abnayan mosque, the Mihrabs, appear to be as plain as the rest of the mosque. Could this phenomenon be taken as one of the characteristics of the Ibadi mosque in the area of Jabal Nafusa ?

Some other questions could be raised concerning the inscriptions found in both mosques of Tnumayat and Abnayan. These questions will be discussed in the sixth chapter which is devoted exclusively to inscriptions of the Jabal.

The decorations which were found in the mosques mentioned above have been merely described up to now. The problems concerning their origin, connections to other Islamic decorative patterns, and their dating will be dealt with later.

Although the storehouses are not meant to be studied in detail, mentioning would help us to form an idea about the layout of a typical Jabal Nafusa town.

Naturally other points of interest will be raised when the preceding issues are discussed in full.

III

FARSATTA - TAMLUSHAYAT - TINDIMMIRA

CHAPTER III

FARSATTA - TAMLUSHAYT - TINDIMMIRA

Looking at the numerous old villages scattered throughout Jabal Nafusa one could assume that this area was highly populated in the past. Although most of these villages are in ruins, they still retain a great deal of importance. It is worthwhile noting that there is a lot of similarity between most of these villages, but some of them have special characteristics. The governor's residences as well as the cultural centres in the Jabal seem to provide us with some information which is badly needed to understand the vague history of this area. Three of these important centres are, Forsatta, Tindimmira and Tamlushayt.

FORSATTA

The ruins of this old village lie about 8k to the north east of Kabaw. It appears that it consisted of two villages, one older than the other. The one which is believed to be the oldest lies in the hills. Nothing is standing there but an old mosque which is believed to be originally a Christian church .[191] The other village which is our main concern lies about 1k to the south east. It is situated on a hill overlooking the Jafara plain to the north, and the valley of Tamzin to the east and the south. This large village is completely deserted, but occasionally used by the people living in the vicinity .[192]

C. Motylinski describes Farsatta as follows :-

"On a small hill one could see the important ruins of Forsatta, with a mosque in the middle. In front of these ruins towards the south there is the Qasr of Forsatta. One could notice the mosque of

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(191) Despois,op . cit , p.265.

(192) The people living nearby still come occasionally to use the olive press, which is situated in the middle of the village. The storehouse itself is still in use.

Dammi Yayha situated on a mountain. Between this Qasr and Tin-Tamzin there is a big valley full of palm trees. Within that valley there is a ravine which extenols westwards, within the ravine could find a spring, from which the inhabitants of Forsatta get their water. There is also a well before the village itself . The people of this village are Berber Ibadis . They have a Qasr (a storehouse) in which they keep wheat, barley, oil and wool. All these things within the Qasr are under the responsibility of one guard .[193]
R. Basset repeats the same information given by Motylinski, but he adds that the mosque which is situated in the middle of the old village was perhaps a church .[194] He also points out that the commercial relationship between Jabal Nafusa and the Sudan occurred in the 3rd / 9th century .[195] Basset in fact based this statement on the story about the trip made by Abu Yayha to the Sudan. This story was first mentioned by Al-Shammakhi .[196]

T. Lewicki describes Forsatta as follows :-
"F(o)rs(a)ta , actually Forsata or Forsetta is very important village, situated in a district of al-Haraba, in the western part of Jabal Nafusa, not far from Kabau . The description of the ruine of Forsatta was mentioned by Despois. The modern Forsatta is standing apart from the ancient village. One writes the word فرسطا F(o)rs(a)ta or فرسطا F(o)rs(a)ta or فرسطاى al-Fors(a)tai". He carries on to say that F(o)rs(a)ta appears to be one of the most ancient villages in Jabal Nafusa . It was already existing a long time before the Arab conquest. It is known that there was a Christian church there, which was converted into an Islamic sanctuary. Thus the word F(o)rs(a)ta itself is a proof of the ancient origin of the place . It has a Roman origin, we can see the Latin African word Forseta which is linked with, for example ; forsar, the Catalonian, forcar the Portuguese , forzar the Spanish, forzare or "forcer" in Italian . The first mention of this place in Arabic sources was connected

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(193) See T.Motylinski, op . cit , pp.104-5.
(194) R. Basset means here the mosque lying in the oldest part of Forsatta.
(195) R. Basset,op . cit , p.444.
(196) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar , p.312.

with Said al-F(o)rs(a)tai in the beginning of the third / ninth century.[197]

Although Forsatta is deserted, it is still very well preserved and intact .(See fig .57) One can see the similarity between this village and Nalut . The layout of both reminds us of the Ibadi towns in al-Mzab, in southern Algeria .[198] As in the other places discussed above, the storehouse in Forsatta is the focal point of the village. It resembles Nalut's storehouse a great deal. The one in Forsatta, however, has a tower in the middle (See fig .58). This partly collapsed tower proves that this storehouse was also used for defensive purposes. We do know from historical accounts that Forsatta existed in the 3rd/9th century.[199] If we accept that this storehouse was part of the layout of the town, which is most likely, we could assume that this kind of building did appear in the Jabal as early as the 3rd/9th century.

As in nalut the houses in Forsatta are attached to each other. Here it is clear that the houses on the edge of the village form the shape of a wall (See fig .59). These types of streets are popular phenomena in the towns of the desert. Sometimes they are partly covered to provide shade. For example, those in the town of Ghadames (See fig.60).

THE MOSQUE OF ABU YAYHA :

Part of the way down the slope, just to the south of Forsatta stands the famous mosque of Abu Yayha. It is considered to be one of the most venerated and largest mosques in Jabal Nafusa .

This mosque has almost a square shape (See gr.plan fig .61). Attaced to the hall of prayer on the north east is a courtyard with its own mihrab (See fig .62). The sanctuary consists of four riwaqs, covered with barrel vaults. It is evident that there was

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(197) T.Lewicki, op.cit , pp.71-2.

(198) See, M. Roche, Le Mzab Paris 1970, pp.29-30.

(199) As a matter of fact the phenomenon appears even in the towns situated on the coastal strip. See,F.Shafii, al-Imara al-Arabiyya fi Misr al Islamiyya, Cairo, 1970, vol.I, p.643,48. As for the first mentioning of Farsatta in history, see T.Lewicki, op.cit , p.72.

another riwaq extending the mosque to the south east. The qibla wall measures about 11m . while the opposite wall is 11.75m. The north east wall is 12.80m. and the south west one is approximately 12.30m. The Mihrab which is a semicircular nich, an orientation of 1.60 degree and a depth of 90cm. (See fig .63). There is another niche, in the south west wall, almost on the axis of the mihrab, measuring about 90cm in depth. Since there is no function for this niche within the mosque, one could assume that it was at one time an entrance to the mosque. If this assumption is right, this could be the entrance which provided access for the women's section (See fig .64).

There is no doubt that the columns supporting the ceiling were brought from an older place, and it could be a Roman building. The other possibility is that this mosque was built over the ruins of an older building. Excavation on the site might confirm this suggestion.

The room attached to the south east wall, within the sanctuary, measures 7.20m in area. It reminds us of the room found in the mosque of Tnumayat. The fact that the mosque used to function as a school,[(200)] and since a lot of manuscript leaves were found in the hall of prayer, we could conclude that this room was used as a place for keeping manuscripts (See fig .65).

There are two entrances to the sanctuary, one is in the south west wall and measures 55cm in width and about 95cm in height. The other one is in the northeast wall measuring 80cm in width and about 1.15m in height. The latter one has four steps leading down to the sanctuary (See figs.67,68,69). In this respect, this mosque, as many in Jabal nafusa, is partly underground.

The courtyard of the mosque has an irregular triangular shape. In the north side of this courtyard there are three rooms excavated into the hill. They were used to accommodate the visitors to the mosque. The water for the mosque was provided by two cisterns dug into the middle of courtyard (See fig .70).

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(200) Ali Muammar, op.cit, part III, p.82.

A staircase, which leads to the roof and the outside of the mosque in the western side of the courtyard is close to the main entrance (See fig .71). Evidently, the call for prayer was carried out on the roof, or at the top of the staircase.

We have already seen that the minaret, as such, did not exist in the mosques mentioned before. In the mosque of Nalut, however, an architectural feature, called in Jabal Nafusa al-Suma, does occur. We also stated that this suma did not serve any purpose but to indicate the position of the mosque. Al-sawma الصومعة in Arabic means a minaret المئذنة and a convent الصومعة . In North Africa it seems that suma is always associated with a mosque, and in this respect it means a minaret. In the mosque of Ibnayan, however, there is a staircase, within the sanctuary leading to the roof. The mosque of al-Naqa in Tripoli ,which is believed to have been built in the 4th / 10th century(201) has a similar feature, but the staircase here leads to a square-shaped minaret.

In the earliest days of Islam, the prophet's time, the call for prayer was carried out from a conveniently high roof, neighboring the mosque in Madina. The Muslims did not appear to use the minaret until they conquered Syria.(202) The first minarets to be known in Islam were the four towers of a square shape. In the great mosque of Damascus. This type of minaret spread to North Africa and Spain, where it was widely employed .(203) In Jabal Nafusa, however, the case was different. The minaret, as such, did not appear to be used. The absence of this architectural, functional feature, in the mosques of the Jabal, can have two explanations. Firstly, the Ibadis, especially in Jabal Nafusa, wer known for their strict attitude towards old Islamic traditions. On the other hand they were always hostile towards the Umayyads, and this could have led them to believe that the minaret was an Umayyad innovation.

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(201) Al-TIjani, Rihla, p.145. See also T.al-Zawi, Mujam, p. 94.

(202) See, K. A. C. Creswell, Early Muslim architecture, (Oxford 1932-40). Vol. I. p.11. cf. F. Shafii, al-Imara al-Arabiyya fi Misr al-Islamiyya, vol. I, pp. 637, 640.

(203) Creswell, op.cit, pp. 38-9. Cf, Shafii op.cit , 635-6-7.

Secondly, most of the old mosques in the Jabal, were situated in high positions, hence, there was no need for using a minaret.

The staircase leading to the roof of the mosque is very common in Jabal Nafusa. J. Schacht claims that this phenomenon did occur in the mosque of al-Fustat in Egypt and in the houses of Syria, before Islam. He also mentions that it is very popular in the Ibadi places, e.g. Jerba and the south of Tunisia. Schacht concludes that the existence of this feature in some mosques in Nigeria is the result of the contact with the Ibadis in al-Mzab, in Southern Algeria.(204)

We do know that the staircase is still noticeable in so many mosques throughout Libya. Schacht's theory about the employment of this architectural feature in Nigeria is absolutely right. Having these kind of staircases in Jabal Nafusa provides us with more information. Hence, something can be added to Schacht's theory.

As we mentioned above, the staircase leading to the roof does occur in both mosques Ibnayan and Abu Yayha which, on historical evidence, could be dated from the first half of the $4^{th}/10^{th}$ century. We do know that the first town to be built in al-Mzab area dates from the beginning of the $5^{th}/11^{th}$ century. Therefore, both mosques in the Jabal are older than any in al-Mzab. On archaeological grounds we can assume that this feature has traveled west-ward from Jabal Nafusa. There is also a possibility that it went southward, for the contact between the Jabal and the black African countries was established as early as the $3^{rd}/9^{th}$ century.(205)

It is very difficult to give a precise date to the mosque of Abu Yayha since no inscriptions were found. An approximate date, however, can be established on historical grounds. Two men by the name of Abu Yayha were related to Forsatta. One was the

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(204) See J. Schacht, sur la diffusion des formes d'architecture religieuse Musulmane a traverse le Sahara, extrait de trawaux de linstitute de recherches sahariennes (Tome XI), Alger 1954 pp.14-5,19.

(205) M. Roche, op.cit, p.29. Abd al-Rahman M.al-Jilani, Tarikh al-Jazira al-Am, Beirut 1965, vol. I, p.237. J.Schacht, op.cit, pp.21-2. See also al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, pp.312,457.

son of Abu Dhar Sadduq, who died at the battle of Manu in 288/896.[206] The other one was the son of Abu al-Qasim, who lived at the same period. It seems that the latter one was favoured to be related to this mosque for he was one of the most learned men in the Jabal in the first half of the 4th/10th century. He was for quite some time a consultant of Abi Zakariyya, the governor of Jabal nafusa.[207] According to this information we could assume that mosque was probably built in the first half of the 4th/10th century.

It appears that Forsatta was a flourishing town during the time of Abu Yayha. It also seems that this prosperity continued for a long time. In the 8th/14th century Forsatta was still active and poular as an Ibadi centre. Abu Tahir al-Jitali, one of the most, if not the most, distinguished learned men in the Jabal was attracted to this village. He eventually settled there and taught for nine years.[208]

According to the local traditions, Forsatta was largely inhabited during the early years of the 20th century, but the decline of this village started some 50 years ago.

Some shards were found scattered all over the site but they are more apparent around the mosque of Abu Yahya. There is no doubt that this pottery was made in Forsatta for the remains of kilns are still noticeable a few meters to the north east of the mosque (See fig .72). This, however stresses the importance of Forsatta, as one might think that it was one of the pottery making centres in the area of Jabal Nafusa.

It is very clear that shards, which were collected from the site, indicate Islamic mark. In spite of that, they cannot be considered as an adequate material for discussing this topic in further detail. Excavations on this site seem to be badly needed in order to solve the problems concerning this field of Islamic art within this part of the Islamic world .

(206) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, pp.268-9.
(207) Ibid, pp.310-1-2 , 320.
(208) Ibid, p.558. See also Motylinski, op.cit, p.104.

TAMLUSHAYT :

About 20km. to the east of Kabaw lies the old village of Tamlushayt. It is situated on the top of a hill overlooking, to the west, a small valley which leads down to the Jafara plain. On the other side of the valley, one could see Tamzin[209] and Farsatta. Very little was written about Tamlushayt. There is hardly anything concerning the mosque of Abu Nasr, which is our main interest. T.Lewicki, for example, describes Tamlushayt as follows : "It is a village in Jabal Nafusa that lies about 12km. to the north east of Kabaw. According to J.Despois, who in turn depended on local information, the establishment of the mosque of Tamlushayt, took place some one thousand two hundred years ago.If this information is true, the village should have existed in the 2nd/8th century. This place was first mentioned in the 4th/10th century".[210] R.Basset tells us that there is a mosque in Tamlushayt called Buzarzart. He also says that this village is famous for its learned man (Shaykh), Abu Harun al-Tamlushayti, the disciple of Muhammad Abu Khasib. He also points out that the mosque of Abu Nasr is still standing there.[211]

About 1km. to the east of this village lie the ruins of some houses and a small mosque. These remains indicate the extention of Tamlushayt towards the east. Not far from these ruins towards the east lies the mosque of Abu Nasr in isolation (See fig .73).

The remains of the foundations of this mosque indicate that it was one of the largest in the Jabal, for it measures about 144m in area (See gr. Plan fig .74). Today, nothing is standing of the mosque but the qibla riwaq which is covered with a barrel vault. The wall of the qibla measures 12.20m. The mihrab is a plain semicircular niche. It projects out of the qibla wall measuring a depth of 1.50m (See figs.73,74 A). The entrance to the riwaq lies in the north eastern side and measures 62cm in width and about

(209) Tamzin is one of the old villages in the Jabal. It lies about some 10km to the south of Farsatta.
(210) T. Lewicki, op.cit, pp.59-60. See also al-Shammakhi, al-SIyar, p.301.
(211) R.Basset, op.cit, pp.451-2.

90cm in height. This entrance could have been introduced to the mosque when the opening of the arches were blocked up. About 2m behind this wall, to the north west side, the remainder of a column can be seen. This column used to be one of a row supporting the second riwaq within the sanctuary (See figs.75,76).

The mosque was built from rough stones and clay, and the walls have an average thickness of 95cm. It was provided with water by a cistern which lies not far from its north eastern corner (See fig.77). The cistern, which is almost buried with sand, has a cylindrical shape as many other found around the mosques of Jabal Nafusa.

The mosque was called after Abu Nasr Fath b.nuh al-Mlushai who was one of the most learned men in the Jabal during the first half of the 7th/13th century.[212] Although the mosque does not provide us with artistic values, Abu Nasr himself has exhausted his mind to provide the Ibadi with his ingenious works.[213] The mosque, in spite of its simplicity, equips us with a general idea about the Ibadi mosque in Jabal Nafusa in the 7th / 13th century. We could see here that little care was given to the design and architecture. It seems, however, that the teaching, which took place within the mosque, was of greater importance than the look of the building itself. In this respect the mosque of Abu Nasr retains and preserves, early forms of the mosque in Islam .What is very important here is that this very large mosque probably dating from an early period lacks the existence of the minbar. This issue will be discussed in detail when we deal with the biggest, and most important, mosque in the Jabal, which lies in the old town of Sharwas.

TINDIMMIRA :

Some 7km to the east of Tamlushyat lie the ruins of the old village of Tindimmira. It is situated on the top of a hill, which

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(212) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, p.548.
(213) Ibid, p.549. See also Motylinski, op.cit, p.103.

slopes down towards the east, to meet the valley of Sharwas. The ruins of Tindimmira are scattered over a vast area, but most of them are in a bad condition. Today, the people of this village live in modern houses, spreadingin in the vicinity of the old mosque of Abu Mansur al-Yas.

C. Motylinski describes Tindimmira as follows:

"To the west of Tindimmira Qasr. There are a lot of olive trees. The inhabitants of this Qasr possess a large quantity of palm trees. In front of this village, in the middle of a ravine, there is a spring. The people of this area are Berbers. Below the village towards the west, there is cistern from which people get water, and below this a cistern, extends a large valley full of olive and palm trees. This valley separates Tindimmira from the village of Tamzin."(214)

T. Lewicki, however, points out that Tindinnira is the birthplace of Abu Mansur al-Yas, who governed Jabal Nafusa, under the Rustumids, in the second half of the 3rd/9th century. He also mentions that his monumental mosque is still standing there, and visited by the Ibadis of the Jabal.(215) Al-Shammakhi does not describe Tindimmira as such, but he tells us that it was one of the three most important villages in Jabal Nafusa. He also praises this village for its men who contributed a great deal to the history of the Jabal.(216)

Today, nothing would attract attention to the ruins of Tindimmira except the remains of the mosque of Abu Mansur al-Yas (See fig.78). It is situated on a small hill from which one could see the valley of Sharwas towards the east. We already mentioned that Abu Mansur had governed Jabal Nafusa in the 2nd half of the 3rd/9th century, under the Rustumid Imams, Abu al-Yaqdhan and Abu Hatim.(217) We know that Abu al-Yaqdhan ruled for some forty years, 241-281/857-894. What we do not

(214) C. Motylinski, op.cit, pp.103-4.
(215) T. Lewicki, op.cit, pp. 59-60.
(216) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, pp. 301, 307, 315-6.
(217) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, pp. 301, 307, 315-6.

know is the exact year of the appointment of Abu Mansur, as a governor of the Jabal. Anyhow, we can establish an approximate date for the foundation of this mosque, based on two historical events. The first one is the defeat of al-Abbas b. Ahmad b. Tulun by Abu Mansur in 267/881. The second event is the battle of Manu when the Aghlabids defeated the people of Nafusa under the governorship of al-Abbas b. Aflah, the successor of Abu Mansure, in 283/896.[218] Therefore we could assume that the mosque of Abu mansur was built during the years 267-282 / 881-895. In this respect we have here one of the oldest mosques in Jabal Nafusa.

Today only the two front riwaqs in the sanctuary and the qibla wall in the courtyard are standing. The remains of the foundation in the rest of the mosque, can be easily traced. The ground plan of this mosque has almost a square shape, in which the qibla wall measures 19.30m. So does the opposite wall. The north eastern wall is about 18.10m. and the opposite one has almost the same length. The average thickness of the walls is about 1m. As in Abu Nasr mosque, we have here a remain of a column lying behind the second riwaq, towards the north west (See fig .79). We can assume, according to the width of each riwaq that the sanctuary used to consist of five or six riwaqs (See fig .80). The mosque, as it is now, has two entrances. One is in the north eastern wall and measures 72cm in width and 1m in height. The other one is in the north west wall, which was built when blocking up the openings of the arches (See figs .81,82). Both of these entrances do not appear to be original.

On the roof, exactly over the mihrab there is the Suma. It consiste of a square base which has a height of 90cms. Above this base stands a cylindrical shape which is 90cm high. This Suma is similar to the one found in Nalut. Here again, it does not show that it was used for any purpose but to indicate the position of the mosque (See figs.83,84,85,86). As for the opening, which appears

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[218] Ibid, p.224.

in the north west side of the Suma, it seems that it functioned to provide ventilation at one time.

Attached to the sanctuary, on the north east side, is the courtyard with its own mihrab. The only standing wall here is the qibla one, and measures 17.35m in length, while the thickness is about 1.30m. The mihrab has a depth of 1.30m. This courtyard reminds us of the one found in Farsatta. This kind of courtyard is called, in Jabal Nafusa, Musalla (مصلى). This type of Musalla[219] is quite common in the mosques of the Jabal. At the back of this courtyard there are the remains of some rooms. According to the local people these rooms were built recently, to accommodate the people visiting the mosque (See fig. 87).

Looking at this monument from the outside, one may get the impression of a plain mosque, but the two riwaqs standing now, preserve architectural and artistic values of great importance. Therefore, they will be discussed in greater detail.

It appears that this mosque has been restored many times. One of these restorations was recorded by an inscription on stone. Facing the mihrab, to the left on the qibla wall, lies the inscription, which is up to a height of 1.40m. It appears that it was inscribed on a re-used stone. It consists of nine lines written in Kufic and reads as follows:-

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم صلى على نبينا
محمد وال(ه) وصحبه وسلم تسليمـــــا
اسس هاذه المســـــجد في شهـــر الله
المبارك المحـــــرم عــــــــام خمس
وسبيعــــــــــــــــن سنـــــــــــة
بعد ثـمـــــــــن مــــــــأيـــــــــه
في القــــــران التـــــــــــاسع وكتب
سعيد ابن مصبـــــــــــــــــاح ابن ا
براهيم رحمـــــه الله برحـــــمة الله

(219) Musalla means a place which is used for prayer; usually it is used by individuals, therefore it often appears to be a very plain building. The first Musalla, know in Islam was the one outside Madina, where the prophet Muhammad used to worship God. See Creswell, op.cit, vol. I, pp. 598-9.

In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful may God pry on our prophet,
Muhammad, his family and his companions, and may God give them peace.
This mosque was established in the month of Allah, the blessed al-Muharram in the year five and seventy
After eight hundred
In the ninth century, it was written by Said b. Misbah bin
Ibrahim with the mercy of God may Allah give him mercy (See fig .88).

We can see here that this restoration took place in 875/1470. It appears that the writer has divided the surface area of the stone into five horizontal sections, intending to write every two lines in one section. He did not succeed in writing the second line in the second section, starting from the top, because he inscribed the first line sloping downwards towards the left end. It appears also, that the sixth line of the inscription was added later on, for the writing in this line does not correspond with the rest of the inscription. The writer used the word to establish أسس when he should have written the word to rebuild استجد . This mistake is not surprising when we realize that his knowledge of Arabic was not very comprehensive. This can be noticed when we find out that he wrote Ibn ابن with an alif in the eighth and the ninth lines. According to Arabic grammar, the letter alif has to be omitted from Ibn when it comes between two names. The style of this writing will be discussed in a later chapter devoted to inscriptions.

Facing the mihrab again to the left of this inscription, on the qibla wall, there is a window-like recess. The whole decorated frame of the recess has been cut from one flat piece of stone. The stone was carved into three arches with two pillars, one of which is missing. The base of this stone measures about 28cm. whilst the height is 33cm (See figs. 89-90). This kind frame was also found in the mosque of Ibnayan. One may wonder from where the artist got this shape of frame. In point of fact, it was used on a large scale in Fatimid architecture, and it occurs in Umayyad building in Spain.

The first example of this kind of frame could be the one that occurs in the great mosque in Damascus, on the façade of the sanctuary. It also appears in al-Ukhaidar in the great hall.

The mihrab suffered a great deal from incorrect repair. Nevertheless it is still the most elaborate one found all over Libya[(220)] (See fig. 91). It has a rectangular niche, measuring 70cm in width and 1.50m in depth. This oblong niche was found, as we mentioned above, in the upper mosque of Nalut. We do know that this shape of mihrab, occurred in the eastern world, Iraq and Iran, since the early Islamic era. It did appear in al-Ukhaidar and in the mosque of Tarikh Khana. Both of them are believed to have been built in the $2^{nd}/8^{th}$ century. It has also been found in the great mosque of Samarra, and the mosque of Abi Dulf. The mihrab of al-Jawsaq al-Khaqani and another one found recently in Samarra have the same kind of niche. All of them date from the first half of the $3^{rd}/9^{th}$ century.[(221)] We do also know that it appears in al-Mzab in Southern Algeria and in some parts of Nigeria.[(222)] What we do not know, is how it came to be employed in the western Islamic world. Anyhow, J. Schacht claims that the Mzabis could not have borrowed it from the Muslims in Nigeria, but that the contrary is correct.[(223)] Here again, we cannot disagree with his theory, but having this kind of niche in the mosque of Abu Mansur may clarify the link between Jabal Nafusa and both areas mentioned by Schacht. As we stated above, the oldest town in al-Mzab area dates back to the $5^{th}/11^{th}$ century.[(224)] Therefore, the mosque of Abu Mansur is older than any in the Mzab area. Upon archaeological facts we can state that this kind of rectangular niche of the mihrab

[(220)] In the three Islamic sites, Ijdabiya, sultan, and Zawila where excavations have been carried out, none of the Mihrabs found in these sites could be compared with the one found in the mosque of Abu Mansur. The statement does not include the Turkish period, for the Mihrab in Ahmad Basha Qurgi's mosques in Tripoli are of great quality, but they are decorated with tiles. See, G. Messana, L' Architecture Musulmane Libyenne, Tripoli, Tunisie, 1977, pp. 161, 173.

[(221)] See Creswell, op.cit, Vol. II, p. 258. See also Shafii, op.cit, pp. 614-5.

[(222)] J. Schacht, op.cit, pp. 15,18.

[(223)] Ibid, p. 19.

[(224)] M. Roche, op.cit, p. 29. See also al-Jilani, op.cit, Vol. p. 237.

was borrowed from Jabal Nafusa, to be employed in al Mzab mosque. There is also a possibility that it went southwards. From the Jabal itself. According to history, the people of Nafusa have traveled to Tahirt and Wirgala in the south of Algeria, as early as the 2nd/8th century and they also visited Nigeria in the 3rd/9th century.[225]

The mihrab in the mosque of Abu Mansur was built of well-cut stones adorned with elaborate floral and geometrical decoration. These fine dressed stones covered the mihrab and flank it on either side to length of 1.30m. They rise up to the springing of the vault, on the qibla wall. Instead of two columns flanking the mihrab we have here rectangular shaped stones, surrounding its opening, but the upper part is missing. These stones are divided vertically in two halves, the outer ones on both sides are decorated with hatched patterns. Facing the mihrab, the other half, to the left, displays plant motifs, which resemble palmettes. In the remaining half the decoration was juxtaposed within triangles, each bearing a leaf with three lobes (See figs.91,92,93).

Although a great deal of the ornamentations have faded away, due to lack of care, some are still well-preserved. The remaining decoration shows great quality which was achieved in the Jabal towards the second half of the 3rd / 9th century.

The decoration flanking the mihrab on each side consists of two decorative units, repeated many times all over (See fig. 94). The first one consists of three kinds of circles different in size. The smaller one bears an open 8- petalled rosette. The medium one displays an open 12- petalled flower. The biger circle consists of three consecutive discs. In the inner one there is a 16- petalled flower. The other two are decorated with rope-work. A leaf with 3 lobes occurs between these three different kinds of circles.

The second unit consists of an inner disc bearing an open 12- petalled flower, surrounded by four rosettes each having eight petals. Between the latter ones there are plant decorations

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(225) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, pp. 154-5, 214, 312.

displaying either a 3 lobed leaf or palmettes. The whole decoration in this unit is surrounded by a circle (See figs. 95-95).

When facing the mihrab, the dressed stones end, on the right hand side, with rectangular pieces of stone rising up to the springing of the vault. They are again divided vertically in two sections. The one to the left is decorated with a diagonal network, each bearing four symmetrical leaves. The other section is inscribed with chequering (See fig. 96). On the other side of the mihrab the stones appear in a similar way but here, the bottom resembles a small column (See fig. 97).

It appears that the inside of the mihrab, especially the upper part, underwent a major restoration. As a result, some of these carved stones were lost and some were covered or greatly damaged. On entering the mihrab, plant motifs, arranged vertically, appear on both sides. The motif here displays stylized grouping of leaves each springing from one point. Towards the lower part of the mihrab the circles occur again, bearing rosettes, varying from eight to twenty petals. Between these circles the leaf with three lobes is predominant (See figs. 98, 99, 100).

The back wall of the mihrab has suffered considerable damage. Fortunately, the decoration on the second stone, starting from the bottom, is still well preserved. The decorative elements here, compared with the remaining ones on this wall, seem to be repeated. Hence, it is worthwhile describing it in detail. It consists of four consecutive circles inscribed on a square shape. They will be described in sequence stating with inner circle (See fig. 101):

1- Four lines decorated with rope-work cross the centre, dividing the circle into eight quadrants, each quadrant bearing decoration identical to the opposite one. What follows is a description of each one, starting at the top and going clockwise (See fig. 101).
    a- There are two half circles, each displaying a half rosette, while in the middle an open 8- petalled rosette occurs. A three lobed leaf appears in between. The remaining space has a floral decoration, and the half circles in the opposite quadrant are empty.

b- There appear the two empty half circles and plant decoration, resembling palmettes.

c- The two half circles in the quadrant, bear a leaf with 3 lobes. They are topped with flora decoration.

d- The decoration here is identical to b.

2- There are eleven half discs, each bearing a half rosette. The space in between displays plant decoration (See fig. 101).

3- This circle was left empty (See fig. 101).

4- The decoration here is similar to No.2 . The only difference is that the half discs are smaller, the half rosette consists of 4 petals instead of 6 and the number of the half discs is twenty-two (See fig.101).

Thus the carving of these circles, on the square shape. resultin four corners, having a symmetrical decoration. The top left hand corner is divided into two parts, bearing a symmetrical ornamentation. The decoration in each section consists of half disc with a half rosette and plant motifs, resembling palmettes, as well as a leaf with 3 lobes. On the top there is a line of Kufic inscription consisting of three words. The words read Abd Allah (slave of God). It seems that the other two words, except Allah, were added later on (See figs.101,102). On the same wall at a higher level, another complete decorative unit has escaped the damage. Decoration, here again, consists of four circles. The inner circle is divided into four quadrants by two lines crossing the centre. A square shape was inscribed in the middle, but one of its sides was not finished. An arch shape was caraved on each side of the square divided vertically in two parts by a line. Here again, on one side of the square an arch shape was missed out. All the lines, including the circumference of the circle are decorated with rope-work. The space resulting from these shapes was filled with flora decoration. The other two circle have no decorations, but the outer one is decorated with hatches (See fig.103).

There are two small rectangular pieces of stone protruding out of the <u>qibla</u> wall. One is on the arch of the <u>mihrab</u> and the other is to the left of it (See fig.104). Although they are used today for

hanging rosary beads, the actual function of these stones is unknown. These kind of stones appear again in the mosque of Sharwas. We will try to find a reasonable explanation for their original function when discussing that mosque.

Some decorated pieces of stone are scattered on the walls and the ceiling of the mosque. Evidently, these pieces do not belong to the places where they appear now (See figs. 105, 106). This happened because of incorrect restorations, which were carried out at different times. Another rectangular piece of these decorated stones was found in the mosque. The decoration here displays half circles with a half flower and rope-work. The decoration is arranged vertically. It appears that this stone was intended to form an edge. The poor carving of the decorative elements here may suggest that it was a waste (See fig. 107).

The repair within the two standing riwaqs resulted in the disappearance of the columns within the new pillars. One column, close to the north east entrance, escaped those restorations. What draws attention to this column is its capital, which is decorated with plant motifs (See fig.108).

The Ibadi people of Nafusa were famous throughout their history for maintaining the old Islamic traditions, not only in the field of religion, but also in matters concerning art and architecture. The ruins of the old villages in Jabal Nafusa do not show any tendency towards taking art and architecture seriously. Therefore, it is rather surprising to find a mosque in Jabal Nafusa, decorated with such quality. The picture might change when we understand the historical period in which the mosque of Abu Mansur was built and decorated. As a result of the treaty between the Rustumid Imam, Abd al-Wahhab, and the Aghlabids which took place in 196/811, nothing was left for the Aghlabids to rule from their previous territory in Libya, but the city of Tripoli and the sea. The rest was considered as part of the Rustumid Dynasty.Consequently, the governor of Jabal nafusa was to rule a large area, extending

from the Jabal to the district of Sirt, in the east.[226] Abu Mansur, himself, governed the whole area from Jabal Nafusa in the second half of the 3rd/9th century. At this period Tahirt, the Rustumid capital. Enjoyed the appreciation of artistic and architectural works because of peace and wealth within the dynasty.[227] Abu Mansur with an important position must have been affected by the new mood within the Ibadi community and ordered to have an elaborate mosque.

We can see that some details in the decoration were missed out or unfinished, and some were inscribed with less quality than most of the decoration. The logical explanation appears to be that the carving was carried out by more than one artist. It seems that there was one artist (master) who possibly came from Ifriqiya (Tunisia) and some others who could be from the Jabal and worked under his supervision.

We have to go into some details in order to categorize our decoration on one hand, on the other hand to understand how it was employed in Jabal Nafusa. It is an accepted fact that Islamic art was influenced by previous artistic works, mainly the Hellenistic and Persian. Needless to explain this matter in detail, the decoration of the Dome of Rock, Mashatta Palace, the Aqsa Mosque and other buildings show very clearly the degree of this influence.[228] It is also very well-known that the characteristics of Islamic art were born in Samarra. This city was built in 221/836. From this place the newly born style spread to many parts of the Islamic world.[229] Excavation in Samarra uncovered a great deal of stucco decoration. The style and the motifs used in the decoration of Samarra were evident in Egypt, in the mosque of Ibn Tulun, which was built in 263-265/876-879.[230] The characteristics of Samarra decoration

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[226] Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, pp. 154-5, 214, 312.
[227] M. Abu Dabbuz, op.cit, part III, pp. 544-5.
[228] Creswell, op.cit, Vol. I, pp. 87-8. See also, M. Van Bercham, Creswell's Book, op.cit, Vol. I. pp. 227-8. Cf, Shafii, op.cit, p. 227.
[229] Creswell, a short account of early Muslim architecture, op.cit, pp. 259, 289-90. See also Shafii op.cit, pp. 265-6, 399, 401, 417, 419, 421.
[230] Shafii, op.cit, pp. 421, 425, 463-4.

also appeared on pottery and woodwork dating from the 2nd half of the 3rd / 9th century.

When comparing the decoration of Samarra and the mosque of Ibn Tulun with the one found in the mosque of Abu Mansur, we can easily establish the link between both of them. One could see the similarity in the arrangement of flora and plant decoration, and the inscribing of rosettes in circles or squares. The link can be noticed in the appearance of the palmettes and the popular stylized leaves. Finally, one should not forget the horror of Vacui and the absence of living beings (See figs. 49, 50, 51, 52, 53).

So much for the eastern Islamic influence. In spite of this links, the question of the employment of this kind of decoration in Jabal Nafusa has to be sought in Mediaeval Ifriqiya. Examining the decoration in al-Qayrawan, Susa, the mosque of al-Zaytuna and Sedrata in southern Algeria, we can come to the conclusion that eastern Islamic influence is evident in these places.(231) Comparing the decoration found in the mosque of Abu Mansur, with decorations found in the places mentioned above, it appears that the link here is stronger. In order to understand this relationship between the two, we have to turn to historical accounts. The mosque of Al-Qayrawan was built in the 1st / 7th century but later on most of this building was demolished and reconstructed. What concerns us here is the decoration on the qibla wall and the wooden minbar . According to historical and archaeological accounts, these decorations date from the year 248/862 (See figs. 55, 56).(232)

The Great Mosque of Susa is believed to have been built in 236/850-51.(233) The decoration found here corresponds with that found on the qibla wall in the Great Mosque of al-Qayrawan (See fig. 57,58). Thus the date of the decoration in both mosques is older than our decoration in the Jabal. Comparing the decorative

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(231) G. Marcais, Notes et documents, VIII, Coupole et plafonds de la grande Mosquee de Kairouan, Paris 1925, p. 26. See also G. Marcais, Creswell's Book, op.cit, Vol. II. P. 253.

(232) See P. Sebag, the great Mosque of Kairouan, translated by R. Howard Paris 1965 pp. 39-40. See also Shafii, op.cit, pp. 633-4.

(233) Creswell, a short account of Muslim Architecture, op.cit, p. 272.

patterns in the three places, one could see the irrefutable link, combining the two. One may notice from a first glance, the similarity in the appearance of decorative schemes within circles, as well as the emergence of the open 8-petalled rosettes. The relationship can also be traced in the three lobed leaf, the palmettes and lack of arabesque. The diagonal network decoration with symmetrical plant motifs is evident in both mosques of al-Qayrawan and Abu Mansur. Moreover, a squar shape, bounded by arch shapes, found in Abu Mansur's mosque, appears also in al-Qayrawan, the only difference being that the one in the Jabal is carved in a circle, instead of a square shape .

According to G. Marcais, the decoration in the mosque of al-Qayrawan has a recognizable eastern influence coming from Iraq, but the detail of the forms employed in this decoration is Roman African [(234)]. Before we establish any conclusion concerning the influence of al-Qayrawan on Jabal Nafusa, we have to examine the decoration in the third place in question . This place is the south of Algeria where the Rustumid Dynasty emerged in 160/777 and collapsed in 296/909.

Unfortunately, no excavations have been carried out in Tahirt, the capital of the Rustumids. Luckily, we have the history book of Ibn al-Saghir, who actually lived in Tahirt before the downfall of the Rustumids and wrote his book in the 4th / 10th century. Therefore, one may have a general idea about this old flourishing city which may help in throwing some light on our subject .

Tahirt was a highly populated city, where the inhabitants adopted different religions. Besides the Jews and the Christians, there were the orthodox Muslims who came originally from Ifriqiya, the Persians and the Ibadis, who came from the Jabal Nafusa and other Berber tribes settling in the area. Each of these groups built their own quarters in Tahirt.[(235)] It seems that the

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(234) G. Marcais, Creswell's Book, op.cit, p. 253.

(235) Ibn al-Saghir al-Maliki, Sirat al-Aimma al-Rustumiyyin, (Paris 1907) pp. 7-8, 13, 26. Al-Jilani, op.cit, p. 231. See also al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, p. 158.

people of Nafusa formed the backbone of the Rustumid Dynasty. They were appointed in very important positions . For example, they were responsible for keeping order within the city, as well as controlling the treasury (بيت المال) of the state .[236] We must not forget that Jabal Nafusa itself, was part of the Rustumid Dynasty and the governors of the Jabal were appointed by the Rustumid Imams .

During the 3rd / 9th century the city of Tahirt was famous for its wealth and prosperity. This prosperous situation was mainly achieved by the caravan trade between the African countries lying in the south and the Aghlabid Dynasty in the north, as well as the Idrisids and the Umayyads in the north west.[237] Due to this wealth and stability within the Rustumid Dynasty, the people of Tahirt, especially the rich, became interested in building palaces and other elaborate foundations.[238] This situation, reminds us of the Umayyads in al-Sham, when they too enjoyed both wealth and stability. In the light of these historical accounts we can assume that these palaces were immensely decorated . We can also foretell that these decorations were influenced by the femaus sammaran style . Moreover, the influence of Ifriqiya must have been very strong. What gives this assumption a solid ground is the decoration found in Sedrata .

The city of Sedrata lies about 800km to the south of the capital, Algeria, and about 14km away from Wirqala. It was considered to be the second Ibadi capital, after Tahirt . It was built during the 4th/10th century and deserted in the 7th/13th century.[239] It remained covered by the sand until the excavation uncovered part of it at the end of the 19th century A.D. The latest excavation there was carried out by M.Van Bercham in 1951-55. All the excavations

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(236) Ibn al-Saghir, op.cit, pp. 27, 31. See also al-Shammakhi al-Siyar, p. 221.

(237) Ibn al-Saghir, op.cit, p. 13. Abu dabbuz, op.cit, part III. Pp. 544-5.

(238) Ibn al-Saghir, op.cit, pp. 12, 26-7. Al-Jilani, op.cit, p. 231. Abu Dabbuz, op.cit, part III, pp. 544-5-6.

(239) M. Van Berchem, Sedrata, studies in Islamic art and architecture, in honour of Professor Creswell (Cairo 1965) p. 8. See also Abu Dabbuz, op.cit, part III, p. 546.

were focused upon uncovering one building know as the court, (المحكمة) The stucco decoration which was uncovered in this building shows again the link between Sedrata and Jabal Nafusa .[240] In Sedrata decorations appear the decorative patterns within circles,the discs,carrying 8-petalled flowers and the diagonal network bearing plant motifs (See figs.59,60,61,62, 63,64).

According to archaeological evidence, we cannot say that Tahirt and Sedrata influenced Jabal Nafusa, but the contrary is correct . If we consider the historical account, then it becomes clear the influence of Southern Algeria is evident on Jabal Nafusa . Until new archaeological evidence emerges from the South of Algeria, the mosque of Abu Nansur will remain the oldest decorated Ibadi building standing nowadays . We may conclude that the elements of the decoration in the mosque of Abu Mansur, the symmetrical presentation of plants, and the arrangement of geometrical designs are an Islamic innovation. The influence of the Great Mosque of Qayrawan, which in turn was affected by eastern Islamic art and Roman African forms, is evident in the mosque of Abu Mansur .

Upon this conclusion we presume that the artist who was responsible for the decoration in Ibnayan mosque was trying to imitate the ornamentation in the mosque of Abu Mansur . In three of the eight circles, flanking the mihrab in Ibnayan, appear the open 8-petalled flower, which is a predominant decorative feature in the mosque of Abu Mansur. The Qayrawan influence on Ibnayan is more than evident . Four circles in the mosque of Abu Harun display a six pointed star which appears in the mosque of al-Qayrawan . The remaining circle in the mosque of Ibnayan has a cross shape and stylized plant motif is identical to the one found in al-Qayrawan (See fig. 55).

It is clear, therefore, that the decoration in Ibnayan has strengthened the theory that the influence has come from the north west rather than the south west . Upon the whole discussion of the

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[240] The eastern Islamic influence on Sedrata is pointed out by M. Van Bercham . See the same article p. 27.

decoration we may state that the decoration on the ceiling of Tnumayat mosque is only a poor imitation of the decoration of the mosque of Abu Mansur, Ibnayan and maybe other vanished building in Jabal Nafusa .

IV
SHARWAS - WIGHU

CHAPTER IV
CHARWAS - WIGHU

The old city of Sharwas شروس is located in what is known administratively as the area of Al-Haraba.It lies about 12kilometers to the south-east of Tindimmira .

Today little is standing on the site besides its mosque and some other buildings which are in ruins. Since Sharwas was considered to be the heart of Jabal Nafusa and to be its distinctive characteristic, geographers and historians have told us more about it than about any other city in the area. However, their data was not sufficient as such ; for example, the geographer Ibn Hawqal when talking about the Jabal said :

"Jabal Nafusa is a great mountain with a length of three days. It has two Minbars for two cities. The first is called Sharwas, which lies in the middle of the mountain; it has springs, delicious grapes and a lot of figs. Its main crop is barley which is the peoples' staple diet".(241)

Yaqut, besides talking about the Jabal, was the only one to attempt to find a meaning for the name of Sharwas. He said :
"Sarus could be interpreted according to the verb meaning impotence. Sarwas, perhaps pronounced with the letter ش shin at the beginning, is a great city in Jabal Nafusa towards Ifriqiyya. It is big and populated and in addition it is the capital of the Jabal. Its people are Ibadis kharijitis.

It has no mosque (Jami) nor do any of the other surrounding villages which are about 300 in number.

Its people did not agree on a man to conduct prayer. The distance between Sharwas and Tripoli is five days."(242)

Al- Bakri, who took his information about Sharwas from Muhammad B. Yusuf Al-Warraq, emphasized the importance of Sharwas as the main city in the Jabal. He also denied the existence

(241) Ibn Hawqal, op. cit. pp. 94-5.
(242) Al-Shaykh Yaqut al – Baghdadi, Mu jam al – Buldan, Cairo, 1906,vol. VIII- P.78.

of any jami mosque in the city or in any of its surrounding villages. He also adds that Amr B.Al As was the man responsible for the conquest of Nafusa whose people were Christians. However, he returned from there on receiving a letter from the khalif Umr B. Al-khattab.[243]

The kitab Al Istibsar. The author of which remains anonymous, although it repeats some of the information we already knew, is worthwhile referring to in order to compare and draw a conclusion when discussing some historical and architectural aspects. Talking about Sharwas the kitab Al-Istibsar tells us that it was an old, great city which contained old ruins and its people were Ibadis. It also mentions the absence of a jami mosque but it adds that the people did not recognize Friday prayer due to their sect teachings. In the end it saya that the Jabal was full of many nations with different ways of thinking but most of them were Ibadis and did not have a specific ruler.[244]

Al- Shammakhi did not write about Sharwas as a separate topic but he often related it to the events which took place in the area . Hence we were able to reach some conclusions not mentioned by Al- Shammakhi as he was not conscious of their importance . However, he emphasized the status of Sharwas أم قرى جبل نفوسة the chief settlement in the area.[245]

Apart from the writers mentioned above, who repeat almost the same information, modern writers have not assisted us a great deal in forming a clear picture about this important site. For example, R.Basset repeats the same data given by Ibn Haqal, Al-Bakri and Al- Shammakhi. Basset, however, added that Sharwas was merely ruins but its mosque, known as abu Ma ruf, was still standing on the site. [246]

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(243) Al-Bakri, op. cit, p. 9.

(244) See M . Y . Najm A . Abbar, Libya fi kutub al – Tarikh wa al-Rihalat, Benghazi, 1968, pp. 58-9.

(245) Al- Shammakhi , al- Siyar, p. 273.

(246) R. Basset, op. cit, pp. 455-6.

T. Lewicki also described Sharwas according to what has bean mentioned by Al- Bakri, Ibn Hawqal and the Kitab Al–Istibsar . He relied on Al- Shammakhi in claiming that Sharwas was a caravan centre.[247] In spite of his repetitive information he added to our knowledge when he went on to describe the old city as follows :

> "The ruins in Sharwas are named after Abu Ma ruf who was related to the city itself. It lies in a large valley known as The Valley of Sharwas .
>
> The vast area over which the ruins spread indicates the historical importance of the city . At the centre of this site stands a mosque which contains five aisles. Its height indicates its ancient glory".[248]

He also added that one Qasr lies close to the mosque, while to the east there was a market attached to the Jewish quarter . So far there is no archaeological evidence to support such a statement. The oral traditions , however, go along with such information.

Motylinski tells us very little about Sharwas, but he did emphasize its importance as far as Jabal Nafusa is concerned. He also talks about some of its Shuyukhs (learned men) relying on Al- Shammakhi's book.[249].

The old city was built close to the southern end of the Sharwas valley, to the eastern side, on a small hillock (see fig 109). This position allowed the city to overlook the valley to the west and to be surrounded by the hills from the other three direction. Its location would immediately draw our attention when compared to many old sites in the Jabal. For examble, none of those sites mentioned above was built in a valley. The situation of Sharwas may lead us to suppose that it was established during a peaceful era. We have already explained how the Muslims were faced with no difficulties in taking over the city. Since Amr's return from Sharwas we have no historical records to confirm that the city was

(247) T. Lewicki, op. cit, 43-4 .
(248) Ibid , p. 44.
(249) Motylinski, op. cit. 100.

ever taken again. The reason seems to be very clear. The position of Sharwas in the middle of Jabal Nafusa necessitates the conquering of many towns and villages in order to reach the heart of the Jabal. The easiest way was to follow the valley of Sharwas from the Jafara plain but this short cut to the city formed a trap to those who tried to take it over. Villages situated at the top of the hills on both sides of the valley played an important role in halting those attacks and defeating the invading forces.[250] Therefore Sharwas enjoyed prosperty and security for quite some time. Water was no problem for the city at any time.
Besides the main spring, Al- Saniya السانية , which is situated to the east of the city, there are two other springs on the western side of the valley. Rain also contributes as a source of water.

Today Sharwas is in ruins which spread over a vast area. The remains of some buildings are still standing on the site. To the north-east of the mosque, which lies in the centre of the site, there are the ruins of a large building covered by debris. With the lack of excavation,it is rather early to suggest that this was the storehouse of the city (Qasr).(See fig.110) To the east of this building extends the area which is known as the (Suq) market, but so far there is no archaeological evidence to support this statement.[251] Towards the north-eastern end of the city lies the Jewish cemetery where some tomb stones bearing inscriptions have bean found.[252] At the top of the mountain which overlooks the city from the north-east, lies a huge building known to be used as the library for the people of Nafusa (See fig.111) .

As far as the ruins of Sharwas are concerned , the mosque is considered to be the most important monument standing on the site. Its good condition is due to the continuous restorations carried

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[250] Al- Shammakhi, al- Siyar, pp. 243- 4, 547.
See also Y. Mu' ammar, op. cit, part 11,p. 181.

[251] T. Lewicki, op. cit, p . 44

[252] This inscription is going to be mentioned later in this chapter.

out by the people of the area generation after generation.[253] Although Sharwas is a deserted city, the mosque is still visited and sometimes restored, since it was looked upon as one of the most venerated places throughout the Jabal.[254] The people often use the ruins of Abu Ma' ruf khirbat Abi Ma'ruf when referring to the old city of Sharwas. As for the mosque, it is always named after the same man .

In spite of the importance of this site and especially its mosque, we have seen that no one writer has discussed it in great detail. Our aim, therefore, is to fill this gap and see if we can gain a better understanding of the most famous city in the whole of the Nafusa area .

This mosque lies on a small hill occupying the centre and overlooking the valley of Sharwas to the west and southwest (See fig.112). It has a rectangular shape of which the northeastern wall measures about 15.30m, and the south-eastern wall measures about 12.90m.The north-western wall has a length of nearly 14m,while the south-west side is about 15.30m. and the average thickness of the walls is approximately 1m.(see ground plan fig 113).

Looking at the mosque from the outside it reminds us of the storehouses, the only difference being that it is smaller and has a different shape (see fig 114).

The restoration work cannot be seen here only in the walls but it is also evident in the buttresses supporting the Qibla wall (see fig 115). From a distance one could notice the Sum'a dominating the roof exactly on top of the mihrab.

It reminds us a great deal of the one in Tindimmira's mosque (see fig 116). The mosque in Sharwas was built of stones and clay

[253]It is an old tradition in this area which still goes on that the people in the villages surrounding Shawas are responsible for the upkeep of the mosque. Different villages are responsible for restoring particular parts of the building .

[254]People from all over the Jabal and the al-Mzab area still come to visit this mosque. In addition, the people of the village of Magas, which lies about 8 km . to the north – east of Sharwas, make an annual one – day visit to the mosque.

and it appears that it was never whitewashed on the outside. Therefore it is always hard to locate the mosque when approaching the site for the first time, but its Sum'a is often the first feature to strike the visitor's attention (see fig 117). The mosque has no openings except two entrances; the first is in the middle of the north-eastern wall and measures about 70 cms. In width and 1.5m. in height. The other entrance lies opposite to the first in the south–western wall. It measures about 70 cms. In width and 1.10m. in height. The latter entrance has a semi- circular stone at its top. This entrance reminds us a lot of the one in Tnummayat's mosque, except that the inscription in Tnummayat is in incised while in Sharwas it is in relief, (see fig 118). This inscription reads as follows:-

لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره (على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون) .

1) There is no God but Allah ; he has no associate.
2) Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah ; he sent with guidance and the religion of truth to proclaim it over (all religion even though the pagans may detest (it)

In appearance this mosque, compared to other mosques in the Jabal, may seem bigger , but on entering one is immediately struck by its huge size. This impression is due to the fact that almost half of the building is underground . The mosque consists of five riwaqs covered with barrel vaults. The inside of the mosque appears to have undergone a great deal of restoration to the extent that most of the columns have disappeared within the newly constructed piers. The repairs are more obvious in the ceiling where the damage has been more considerable due to the rain . Fortunately all the work that has been carried out in the mosque has not altered its original structure.

There is a partition wall within the mosque which extends from the south-west side and runs towards the opposite wall to stop about 2.14m.from it. This partition wall blocks four arches of the

third riwaq but it does not reach the ceiling.[255] It measures about 8m. in length and the average thickness here is about 40cm.

Having this dividing wall in the middle of the mosque splits it into two sections, thus we have the south-eastern section which seemed to be used by men and consists of three riwaqs. The other section which consists of two riwaqs was to serve women . It appears that the men's prayer hall bears great importance in terms of inscriptions, decorations and architectural features. Hence we will tackle both parts in greater detail starting with the men's hall. To make it simpler and easier to follow the discussion, the riwaqs were numbered in sequence starting with the qibla riwaq which lies at the south – east side of the mosque and ending with the riwaq close to the north-western wall (see ground plan fig. 113).

RIWAQ1

The restorations which were carried out here made it obvious that the mihrab standing now is not the original (See fig. 119). However, the mihrab in the mosque of Tindimmira might help us in restoring the picture of the mihrab in Sharwas considering the resemblance that both mosques share. This existing mihrab measures about 80 cms.In width 1.25m. in depth . The two small columns flanking the mihrab remind us of the ones in Tindimira. When facing the mihrab to the right side there is a rectangular stone exactly on the column (see fig. 120).
It bears seven lines of inscription and reads as follows:-

سالم ابن إبراهيم التمزين
الصـانع هاذا الكمـــــور
المبارك سليمـــان بن يـو
سف العنقر التمــــزين
سنة ثلاثة و(أ) ربعيـــن
وميتان وألف صـــــالح
بن عمر البـــــاروني

[255]Thisrtition wall occurs in many mosques in the Jabal Nafusa, we have seen before in Nalut, Farsatta and Abnayan .

Salem bin Ibrahim al- Tamzini,
The builder of this vault,
The blessed. Sulayman binYu-
Suf al- Inqar al- Tamzini
In the year forty three
and two hundred and one thousand, Salih
Bin Umar al- Baruni (equivalent to A.D. 1818)

This stone as well as the style of the inscription and its grammatical mistakes resembles the one found close to the mihrab in Tindimmira's mosque. [256] On the qibla wall just above the mihrab, there are two other inscription. When facing the qibla wall the one on the left hand side consists of three lines and reads as follows: (see fig. 121)

رحم اللـــــــه
...... عبـــــد ا
اللـــه .....

May God have mercy upon
.. ABD
aLLah

The other inscription consists of 7 lines and it reads : (see fig.122)

رب اجعلني مقيم الصـلاة ومن
ذريتي ربنا وتقبل دعــــاء ربنا
أغفر لـــي ولوالدي واللمؤمنين
ربنا لاتزغ قلوبنا بعد أن هديتنا
وهب لنــــــا من لدنك رحمة

3. Oh my Lord! Make me one who establishes prayer and also (raise such).
4. Among my offspring, oh our Lord and accept thou my prayer, oh our Lord.
5. Cover (us) with they forgiveness - me, my parents, and all believers.

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[256] See above chapter 111, p. 96.

6.Our Lord! (the say) let nor our hearts deviate now after thou hast guided us .
7.but grant us mercy from Thine own presence.

(Qur. XIV.40-1,111.8)

One also notices that, as a result of the restorations, some piers emerged including the ones attached to the qibla wall, (see fig.123). The function of these piers was to support the arches crossing the riwaqs, which in turn re-enforce the vaults[(257)] (see fig.124). These arches are also a result of the restoration.

Before we proceed to describing the rest of the mosque, it is worthwhile to solve the problem concerning the question of the existence of a minbar within this mosque. Ibn Hawqal tells us that there were two minbars for two cities in the Jabal Nafusa, one of them was the city of Sharwas.[(258)] Al-Bakari and Yaqut denied that there was any Jami mosque in the Jabal.[(259)] In the Kitab Al–Istibsar it is mentioned that the Ibadis in Nafusa did not recognize the Friday prayer.[(260)]

Al-Bakri's information was misinterpreted by T.Al-zawi,who seems to have ignored the architectural point of view. Al-Zawi was aware, however, of the Ibadis opinion concerning the Friday prayer, which states that the prayer could not be held without the presence of the Justice Imam Amir Al-Mu'minim. In spite of that he was trying, at the beginning, to tell us that the visit of AL-Bakri to Sharwas coincided with the absence of the Imam. Hence, Al-Bakri simply wrote what he observed without finding the reason why the Friday prayer was not held. In the end Al-Zawi tried to interpret AL-Bakri's phrase, "there is no mosque in Sharwas" by saying that perhaps he meant the Jami mosque, because it is irrational to say that mosques did not exist.[(261)]

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(257)Some people from the villageof Tindimmira, who tookpart in the restoration work, confirmed that these arches have been in the mosque all their life-time which is about 70 years.

(258)Ibn Hawqal, op. cit, p. 94.

(259)See above p.114

(260)Ibid, p. 115.

(261)T. al-Zawi, Mu jam, pp. 190, 206-7-8.

In fact, AL-Bakri's statement was straight forward and clear. He meant, surely, that Friday prayer was not held in Sharwas and therefore there was no need for a minbar. The mosque of Sharwas has no minbar and there is no trace to indicate that there ever was one. Another important point is that Al-Bakri did notb visit Sharwas.(262) He even mentioned that he took his information about the city from Ibn Al-Warraq.(263) Even if AL-Bakri visited Sharwas, his visit would not coincide with the absence of the Imam. The fact that the Imamate ceased to exist by the end of 3rd/9th century would make the absence of the Imam illogical.(264)

As for the minbar, perhaps it is worthwhile to refer to other areas of the Islamic world where the same phenomena occurred. We know that the minbar did not exist in Al-Mazab. This would not surprise us now since this area was inhabited by the Ibadis whose teaching explains the problem . what surprises us is the fact that the same phenomenon occurred in the peuls area, whose people were following the Maliki sect and not Ibadism.(265) To solve this problem we have to go into some detail. Al though the excavation in Sedratah (266) is in its early stages, one could assume that there will be no chance of uncovering a minbar on the site.(267) The historical facts, however support this assumption, for Sedratah was established after the fall of the Rustamid dynasty.(268) In other words, they was no need to have a minbar after the Imamate ceased to exist. As for the Tahert excavations, they have not yet started . Anyhow, relying on history again, we believe that the minbar did exist in that city. Ibn Al-Saghir did not mention such a minbar, but he did mention the Jami mosque in Tahert in connection with the

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(262)AL-Bakri, op. cit, p. 9.
(263)Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Warraq 262-263/904-973-4.
(264)C. Basworth, op. cit, pp. 22-3. See also Abu Dabbuz, op, cit, part 111pp. 616-7-8.
(265) J. Schacht, op. cit, p. 15.
(266)See above p. 110.
(267) M. Van Berchem, Sedrata, pp.8,27.
See also Abu Dabbuz, op.cit, part 111, p. 546.
(268) Ibid, p. 546.

Imam Abd Al-Rahman[269] According to Ibadism, the Imam was the decisive character for carrying out the Friday prayer. Hence the minbar should have existed in the city of Tahert.

J. Schacht went half way in solving the problem . He claimed that the absence of the minbar in the peuls area was due to the Ibadi influence.[270] We cannot disagree with Schacht on this statement, but we can go further by asking which Ibadi area was really responsible for this influence. It seems that none of the Ibadi places mentioned above has anything to do with this question . The fact that the early mosques in Jabal Nafusa did not seem to have minbars would suggest the problem has to be sought in the Jabal. In addition, the caravans traveling between the two areas, and also the learned mem of the Jabal visiting the south since the early centuries of Islam, would strengthen this theory.

RIWAQ2

One can notice here that the columns have disappeared within the piers. As a result, the width of this riwaq varies from one place to another according to the size of the piers. One also notices that the arches supporting the vault are roughly triangular in shape (see fig.125). It is worthwhile to mention that this kind of arch was popular throughout the Jabal. It occurred in the storehouse of Nalut, Qasr AL-Jazira, and the buildings of Qasr AL-Haj.[271]

At the end of this riwaq towards the west, there is a staircase leading to the roof (see fig.126). The opening through the ceiling was blocked during one of the restorations. That could have happened when there was no need to reach the roof in order to call for prayer.

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[269] Ibn al-Saghir, op. cit, pp. 12. 14.

[270] J. Schacht, op. cit, p. 16.

[271] Qasr al-Jazira lies about 6 km. to the north of Sharwas, while Qasr al-Haj is another old village situated in the Jafara plain about 151km. to the south-west of Tripoli. See Islamic art and architecture in Libya op. cit, pp. 38-9-40.

We have discussed before the topic relating to staircases in the mosques of Jabal Nafusa.[272] Having this staircase in Sharwas would not change anything in the previous discussion. It may only suggest that it could be the oldest still standing in the area.

At the other end of this riwaq, opposite to the staircase, there is a deep, rectangular recess in the wall (see fig.127). It measures about 50cms. In width and 83cms. In height and approximately 83cms. In depth. One of the blocks forming the recess is decorated with plant motifs (see fig128). The decoration represents three horizontal bands, the middle one being much wider, while the lateral ones are narrower. In the central band there are two intertwined scrolls with punctuated circles in the loops. Below in the narrow register there are a series of rings. A motif that is very frequent in early Islamic art, particularly in the Eastern Islamic world. It is one of the survivals of Sasanian traditions.Its appearance in the Jabal is extremely interesting and it may point to some contact with the eastern Islamic world in the early centuries of Islam. This contact, however, was discussed before when dealing with decoration elements in Jabal Nafusa.[273] It is obvious that this stone is not in its original position. There is a possibility that this recess was a window at one time.

RIWAQ3

This riwaq is the most important one of all, for it contains valuable inscriptions, decorations and architectural features. What strikes the eye here is the small arch situated in the middle of the partition wall (see fig 129).Its importance does not only lie in its artistic features, but also in the question it raises about its original and natural place in the mosque. Answering this question necessitates proceeding to describe this arch in more detail.

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(272) See above, chapter 111, p. 85.
(273) See above, p. 107.

The arch was built of well-cut stones. On the key stone there is a kufic inscription in relief (see fig 130). It consists of three lines and reads as follows:

(قولوا) آمنا بالله وما أنزل إلينا وما أنزل إلى إبراهيم وإسماعيل (وإسحاق) .
ويعقوب والأسباط وما أوتي موسى وعيسى وأما أوتي النبيون من (ربهم) .
لا نفرق بين أحد منهم ونحن له مسلمون .

1. (Say ye) we believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Ibraham, Isma'il (Isaac).
2. Jacob, and the tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) prophets from (their Lord):
3. We make no difference between one and another of them: and we bow to God (in Islam) .

(Qur.S. 11.136)

Above this inscription there is a decoration (see fig 130).The middle part of the design consists of two concentric circles; the inner one bears a rosette with sixteen petals, while the outer one is left empty but surrounded with a ring of small circles, each with a dot at the centre. This rosette is flanked on each side by a circle bearing leaf motif resembling cowrie shells. The whole decoration, except the top, is bounded with shapes resembling arches. The frame of the decoration is hatched diagonally.

As for the vertical stones which support the arch, these bear a decoration of rope-work (see fig 129). The decoration here corresponds with the ones found in Abnayan and Tindimmira.

When facing this decoration, to the right-hand side, one could see a piece of stone projecting from the wall (see fig 131). We have seen two examples of this sort of stone before in the mosque of Tindimmira.[274] As far as we know the only three examples found in Jabal Nafusa. Excavations in the area may reveal others which may give us a clue as to their real function. These three stones were decorated with arch-like shapes. Only the one found in Sharwas has what looks like an inscription but

[274] See, chapter 111, p. 104

it is illegible (see fig 131) One might not be able to explain its function in relation to the mosque. To eliminate this association, the stone was taken out of the wall. After examination the stone appeared to have nothing to do with the wall (see figs 132-133). The trial of restoring it within this building proved to be impossible. Very little could now be said about the function of these stones, although there is great similarity between them and some tomb stones.Since tombstones were not used by the Ibadis in Jabal Nafusa, we may suggest that they belonged to non-Ibadi tombs.

The stones of which the arch was built, together with its decoration, remind us of the qibla wall in Tindimmira's mosque.[275] Having this decoration would not change the conclusion we arrived at when discussing this topic in the third chapter.[276] The question then is where to place the decoration of Sharwas chronologically in relation to others found in the Jabal. This would be answered automatically when discussing the inscriptions at a later stage.

It is obvious that the stones of this arch do not go with the rest of the partition wall. This could be noticed when looking at it from the women's section (see fig 134). Having the inscription and the decoration as it is now, would strengthen the argument that this arch should fit somewhere else in the mosque. The inscriptions and decorations being in this position allowed neither men nor women to look at them. The correct location should be either the qibla wall or the other side of the partition wall. Since the mosque was not meant to be a museum at any time, it can be confirmed that the positioning of this arch was one of the errors made by those restoring the mosque.

In any case, the question we raised in the beginning has not bean answered fully. We rested with finding the original place for this arch. Fortunately we have another mosque in the Jabal

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(275) See, chapter111, p. 101.

(276) Ibid, p. 107-9.

which provides us with a further clue. A close look at Tindimmira's mosque would leave us in no doubt in reaching a logical conclusion.[277] Comparing the two architectural features mentioned above would show the great similarity between them. Accordingly, we may say that the arch as well as the stones surrounding it, used to form part of the original mihrab of Sharwas mosque.

In the same riwaq, just above the previously mentioned one, there is another arch. It is obviously a result of restoration work. The space between this arch and the ceiling was blocked except for a square opening divided vertically by a small column (see figs 134-135). On the arch there are four blocks bearing inscriptions . Three of these are situated at the centre of the arch and are so arranged as to read from left to right when facing the main section. (See figs 136,137,138).

سـبحان اللـه
العظـيم

Glory to God
The Mighty

وقـالـوا (ا) الحمـد
للـه الـذي صـد
قـنا وعـده وأو(ر) ثـنا
الأرض نتبـوأ مـن الجنـة

They will say; praise be to God
Who has truly fulfilled
His promise to us and has given us
(This) Iand in heritage: We can dwell
in paradise.

(Qur.XXXIX 74)

[277] Ibid, p. 101-2.

(أشـــــــــهد) أ (ن) لا
إلـــه إلا اللـــــــــه و
أن محمـــد (أ) عبـــد(ه)
ورســــــــــــولـــه و
مـــا جـــاء بـــه حـــــق

I testify that there is no
God but God and
That Muhammad is his servant
And his apostle and
What he brought is truth

(حسبي اللـــه وهـــو)
اللـــه وهـــو الســـميع
العليـــــــــــــــــم

God is going to judge me and He
Is Allah
The wise

Another kufic inscription appears just below the springing of the arch which runs across this riwaq towards the north-east (see fig 139). The inscription consists of three lines and it reads:

اللـــه (أ) كبــــــر
كبيـــــرا والحمـــــد
للـــه رب العالميـــن

Allah is great
Greater, praise be
To God the Lord of worlds

RIWAQ4

Today the women's section is very dark even on summer days, in spite of part of the ceiling having collapsed leaving a large hole towards the north-eastern entrance. Restoration in the womens section has been quite enormous (see fig 140). The importance of

this riwaq is due to five inscriptions found on the two arches standing in its centre. The same scheme as applied to the latter inscriptions in riwaq3, will follow here (see figs 141,142,143):

قـــل هـــو اللــــــه
اللـــــه الصمـــــد
لـم يـلـد ولـم (يـولـد)

1. Say He is God
2. the one and only, the eternal
3. He begets not neither is he (begotten)
(Qur. CXII1,2,3)

أشهـــد أن لا إلـــــه
إلا اللــــه وأن محمـــد
ا عبـــــده ورســــــو
لــه وما جــاء بــه حــق

1. I testify that there is no God
2. but God and Muhammad
3. is his servant and his apostle
4. and what he brought is truth

يــا أيــها الذيـــن آمنــــو
ا اصبـــــروا وصـــــا
بـــــروا ورابطــــــو
ا واتقـــــوا اللـــــه
لعلـــــكم تفلحــــون

1. O ye who believe
2. be patient and strive to excel
3. in patience and be constant-minded
4. that ye may be happy.
(Qur.111.200)

رضيــنا باللــه الــذي ليــس
كمثلــه ربــا وبالإســـــلام
الــذي لا يقبــل غيــره دينـــا

1. "We take delight in god who no
2. identical and in Islam
3. which is the sole religion to be accepted"

RIWAQ5

Very little could be said about this riwaq. A stone bearing some decoration was found in the south-western wall, about 30 cms. Above the ground. The decoration displays a circle within which there is an eight pointed star (see fig 144). We have come across such a motif before in abnayan and in some other buildings in the Jabal.[278]

In the middle of the north-western wall there are traces of a blocked arch. It looks clearer when standing outside looking at the same wall (see fig 145). It is highly probable that at one time this was the entrance to the women's section. It reminds us a great deal of its indentical counterpart in Abi Yahya's mosque in Farsatta.[279]

At the north-eastern corner of this riwaq there lies a room which is almost square in shape. It is another example of the type of room found in Tnumayat and Farsatta.[280] We have already suggested that this kind of room used to be the place for keeping manuscripts or to store the mosque's belongings. On the south-eastern wall of this room, just on the left hand side when facing its entrance, there is an inscription (see fig 146). This kufic inscription consists of four lines, and reads as follows:

(الإسـلا) م ديـنـا
ومحمـد نبيـــنا و
القـرآن إمامــنا
والسنــة طريقــنا

Islam is our religion
And Muhammad is our prophet, and

(278) See above chapter 11, p. 73.
(279) See chapter 111, p. 84.
(280) Ibid, p.67-84.

The Qur' an is our Imam
And the Sunnah is our Path
The four sentences form the basis of Ibadism.

As far as inscriptions are concerned, the mosque of Sharwas is the richest throughout Jabal Nafusa . A whole chapter will be devoted to discussing its style, date and relation to other contemporary inscriptions found elsewhere. The significance of the inscriptions found in Sharwas would help in throwing some light upon the social structure of the city at that time. During 3rd/ 9th and 4th/10th century Sharwas was a prosperous city as it was described by contemporary writers mentioned above. Its social structure did not seem to differ a great deal from that of Tahert.

Besides the Muslims inhabiting Sharwas, there were also Jews.[281] Although by that time most of the people of the Jabal had been converted to Islam some Christians were still settled in the area. In addition, caravans must have brought some people to the city who did not belong to any of these groups.[282] It is very likely that discussions involving religion and the way of life were going on all the time. The inscriptions seem to support this assumption. The meaning of Islam and its views about other religions was basically explained by phrases scattered all over the mosque. One would notice those messages to أهل الكتاب the people of the Book (Christians and Jaws).

Some inscriptions are interpreting the difficulties which faced the people of Jabal Nafusa when it was under attack by outsiders.[283] Therefore the inscription came to be a slogan asking the people to be patient, confident in God and brave in defending their homes. Overall, the Ibadis did not forget to record the fundamentals of their Islamic sect in the mosque of their capital.

Apart from historical accounts[284] the Jewish presence in Sharwas is confirmed by Hebrew inscriptions found in the site.

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(281) Al-Shammakhi, al Siyar, p.32I.
(282) Ibid, 273.
(283) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, p. 244.
(284) See p.138.

Recently a man from Tindimmira found a Hebrew tombstone in Sharwas and took it into his possession. He only agreed to let the tombstone be photographed (see fig 147). Its inscription consists of six lines. Two or three lines are missing at the top. The translation is as follows:

1.
2. mon /th Shebat (in) the year five thousand
3. hundred and twenty four years to the creation
4. The Mer (ciful one) will set her death as an atonement for all her sins.
5. and may her place be with those that sleep at Hebron.
6. and with Moses and Aaron . Amen, for ever, Selah.

The missing lines of the inscription include the name of the dead woman. Dated Shebat A.M. 5124/ Jan- Feb. 1364 A.D.

Another two similar tombstones were found in Sharwas in what is known as the Jewish cemetery.[285] Only one of them is legible (see fig 148). It has eleven lines of inscription and is dated 29 Sivan 5225/ June 1465.

Its translation is as follows:

1.There was gathered to Paradise Hanuna
2.daughter of Rsbbi Musa, (may) be fa (vour) and li (fe) for our Rabbis
3.and for all Israel, who died
4.on the 29th day of the month Sivan (in) the year
5.five thousand and two hundred
6.and twenty five years
7.to the creation . The Mer (ciful one) will set her death (as)
8.an atonement for all her sins
9.and may her place be with those that sleep at
10.Hebron and with Moses and Aaron
11.and (with those that 1) ie in fu (lness of) di (strese).

The people of the area always believed that Sharwas was destroyed and deserted in the 6th/ 12th century. They claim that this

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[285] See p. 119

event took place due to the war which broke out between Sharwas and its neighbouring town, Wighu. Some writers have also repeated the same story.[286] Having these dated Hebrew inscriptions in Sharwas proves that the city was still inhabited during the second half of the 9th/ 15th century.

We have mentioned before that this mosque, as were all the ruins, was called after Abu Maruf. We know as well from historical accounts that Abu Maruf, the learned man and the governor of Sharwas at one time, died in the second half of the 3rd/ 9th century.[287] All this information does not necessarily mean that he was responsible for establishing the mosque. This could only mean that he restored it or suchlike, because this very mosque was mentioned in connection with some events which took place during the 3rd / 9th century, but not under the name of Abu Maruf .[288] We can conclude as far as the date of the mosque is concerned that it was already in existence during the 3rd/9th century. It would not be reasonable to go beyond this point at this stage and before any excavation.

A large number of shards were found in the area extending around the mosque. To the north-east of the mosque, about 50m. away, a pile of burnt soil was discovered . what led to this discovery was some pottery waste found nearby. If this was not a result of fire, this spot could be covering some clues concerning pottery making in the area. The shards which were found in the site resemble a great deal what was found in Farsatta.[289] They, however, do not offer adequate material for serious study.

Finally when we compare Sharwas with the city of Tahert, in the south of Algeria, some points of resemblance could be drawn; for example, the social structure and the geographical position which allowed both of these places to play important roles

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(286) T. Lewicki, op. cit, p.44-5.

(287) AL-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, pp. 263-4.

(288) AL-Shammakhi, al-SIYAR, PP. 266, 298.

(289) See p. 99.

as caravan centres.[290] Although we have no archaeological evidence to expose the prosperity which Tahert was enjoying the historical accounts seem to be more than adequate in illustrating this aspect.[291] If we accept that Tahert achieved such progress under those circumstances, it is possible to suggest that Sharwas achieved similar prosperity although possibly on a smaller scale.

We must not forget when comparing the two sites that Sharwas was older. It also preceded Tahert in achieving social tolerance between people of different religion and beliefs. Therefore, in spite of the historical information which described Sharwas as a great city, we may, however, assume that excavations will prove it to be of greater importance. This site would not be less important than the other Islamic sites in Libya, Sultan, Ajdabiya and zawila.[292]

WIGHU

About 7 kms. To the south-east of Sharwas lies the ancient city of Wighu. It is situated on a plateau which is divided by many small valleys. Today Wighu is deserted. Its ruins extend over an area of more than 2 square kms. (see fig 149). The recently established village of Mirqas, which lies about 10 kms. To the north of Wighu, has done considerable damage to this old site. The peoble have taken a tremendous quantity of stones from the site to be used for new homes in the village of Mirqas. It is feared that some of these stones may bear inscriptions or decorations. In spite of this, some of Wighu's buildings are in very good condition. The well-cut stones and the technique of construction could be the reason for its well-preserved buildings. There is no other site in the Jabal which matches Wighu as far as its architecture is concerned.

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(290) Al-Shammakhi, al-siyar, p. 273.
(291) Ibn al-Saghir, 0p. cit, pp. 12, 26-7. See also jilani, op. cit, pp. 455-6.
(292) Libya Antiqua, vol. V111, Rome, 1971, pp. 106, 113-4.

The lack of information concerning Wighu in ancient Arabic sources could be due to its location in relation to Sharwas.(293) All that has recently been written about Wighu has been brief. Basset, for example, states that Wighu was a city in the area of Nalut and that it is known as Awlad bin Mahmud. He adds that its houses were 150 in number and its population consisted of both Berbers and Arabs.(294) We notice here that Basset confused Awwlad b. Mahmud's village with the ancient, deserted city of Wighu.

Lewicki pointed out the errors which were made by Basset and which were corrected by Depois. He also relied on some Ibadi sources which mentioned the famous war between the two cities, Sharwas and Wighu. This lasted for 7 years and resulted in the destruction of Sharwas at the end of the 5th/11th century.(295) The section concerned with the destruction of Sharwas is not valid anymore since the discovery of the Hebrew inscriptions. In addition to this, historical accounts would also contradict such a statement.(296) Even disregarding historical and archaeological evidence, it is hard to belive that an Ibadi city would be involved in such a drastic event against another Ibadi city, especially when the city in question was Sharwas.

Wighu was mentioned for the first time in the 2nd/8th century in connection with a man called Abu Abd Allah al wighawi.(297) He was one of the most famous learned people in the Jabal Nafusa at that time. Surprisingly enough, this very simple man was better known than his city and its fine architecture. The remains of the mosque named after him can still be seen in the south-west corner of the site.(298) Toay only one riwaq of the mosque is still standing.

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(293) As seen above, Wighu and other villages surrounding Sharwas were not mentioned by name because they were considered as extentions of the Ibadi capital . See p.

(294) R. Basset, op. cit, p. 458.

(295)Lewicki, op. cit, p. 458.

(296) A. Y. Mu' Ammar, part 11 p. 181.

(297) Al – Shammakhi, al- Siyar, p. 170.

(298) There is another mosque built underground, which lies several meters to the south-west of the mosque of Abu Mahdi. This underground mosque is named by the people of the area, the mosque of Ghazala. It could be the mosue of Ajalman.
See Lewicki, op. cit, p. 47.

Even this qibla riwaq has undergone major restoration work (see fig 150). The rest of the moaque is only indicated by some remains of the foundations and surrounded by piles of debris (see fig 151). In spite of this, a ground plan was carefully drawn by tracing the remains of the foundations. The mosque has almost a rectangular plan, in which the qibla wall measures about11.60m and the north-eastern side is approximately 14.10m. The average thicknese of the walls is about 40 cms. (see ground plan fig 152).

It appears that the mosque used to have two entrances. One was in the middle of the north-eastern wall, while the other was facing it in the opposite wall. Each of them measures about 80 cms. In width. There is a great possibility that another entrance existed in the north-western wall .

The recently restored riwaq is covered with a barrel vault. The inside looks very plain and nothing is worth mentioning except its deep mihrab which measures about 90 cms in width and 1.60m. in depth (see fige 153-154). The mihrab has an elliptical arch in the front and a semidome in the back which is considerably lower towards the back wall. The plan of the niche is an elegant pentagon, a type that is frequent in the Maghrib. Otherwise the niche is simply whitewashed without any decoration.

The arches of the riwaq can still be seen in the northwest wall, thus indicating that they were built prior to it (see fig 155). From the remains of two columns which are almost at ground level one could assert that there were two other riwaqs next to the one still standing (see fig 156). It is very likely that the rest of the mosque consisted of another two riwaqs, due to the remaining space. The two latter suggested riwaqs probably formed the women's section.

Wighu was as famous in the Jabal as Sharwas and Tindimmira. Its role in the caravan trade must have created an active atmosphere in the city. Therefore it is highly possible to suggest that its mosque was not dissimilar from those found in the other two cities mentioned above. Apart from this, the design of Wighu's mosque gives the impression that it was elaborate. It is

very clear that this newly reconstructed riwaq does not correspond with the architectural quality which could be seen in other old buildings still standing on the site. In addition to that the original stones of the mosque are not to be seen lying around which indicates that they were removed by the people when building the town of Mirqas. It is probable that some inscribed and decorated stones are still covered by debris.

Abu Mahdi died outside the walls of the city of Tripoli when Abd al-wahhab, the Rustumid Imam was besieging the city in 196/811.(299) Historical accounts, however, support us in claiming that this mosque already existed in the 2nd/8th century. It was mentioned in connection with the visit of the Rustumid Imam, Abd al-wahhab, to the city of Wighu in 190-1/805-6.(300) Accordingly it is the first mosque to be mentioned in association with Jabal Nafusa. Therefore its ground plan is of great importance as far as the Ibadi mosque is concerned. It seems that the layout of Wighu's mosque was the prototype used in the Jabal for centuries to come.(301) In effect, the similarity in the lay-out could be noticed in all the mosques discussed so far. It seems that it is now possible to form a clear idea concerning the basic of the Ibadi mosques in the Jabal during the early centuries of Islam.

The characteristics of the mosques in the Jabal Nafusa are that, al though they are all rectangular in their ground plan, yet thry give the appearance of square buildings. Usually they have three entrances. Decorating is almost absent. Simplicity and the presence of essential features are the basic requirements of Ibadi mosques. Whenever one comes across some extensive surface decoration, as we have already seen a few examples of, then these are due to individual approach.

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(299) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, pp. 158-9.
See also Abu Dabbuz, part 111, op. cit, p.510-1.

(300) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, pp. 158-9. See also Abu Dabbuz,part 111, 0p. cit, p. 500.

(301) Almost all the mosques we discussed so far share the same layout.

We should not overlook the fact that mosques in the Jabal always occupied comparatively small areas, irrespective of the large number of people within a given city.[302]

Dividing the hall of prayer into two sections by a partition wall was one of the unique characteristics of the Ibadi mosque. Such a phenomenon did not occur in early Islamic mosques elsewhere. The absence of the minbar in the Jabal, as we explained above, had to do with teachings of Ibadism itself. As for the minaret , the Jabal did not seem to apply this architectural feature during the first six centuries of Islam. The people of the Nsfusa, however, indicated their mosques by a small structure built on the roof which has been wrongly interpreted as a minaret. Such a structure which was, and still is, known as al-Sum;a, is one of the most striking features of the mosques in the Jabal. Having the buildings partly or fully underground was mainly due to the climate. Buildings of this type would provide coolness during summer and warmth throughout the winter.

The question which faces us now is how early have the people of the Nafusa adopted this type of a mosque and why did it not evolve in other parts of the Islamic world.

We are not suggesting that the Jabal had no architects or skilled artists who would not have been able to build elaborate mosques during the early Islamic centuries . The fact that some buildings with well-cut stones and elaborate decorations were found in the Jabal, would at once refute such a theory.

As for the adoption of this type of a mosque, the answer has to be sought in the east, especially in Iraq. One should point out that Ummayyad influence and architectural trends had hardly any impact on the Jabal. The answer, it seems, lies in two parts. The first part is that the Ibadi mosque borrowed its basic characteristics from the early mosques in Iraq, for examble Al-Kufa and Al-Basra.The existence of ditches around the mosques in Iraq was due to war circumstances, as well as to their geographical position.

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(302) See al- Shammakhi, al- Siyar, p. 310.

Having no courtyards in the mosques of the Jabal was due to the climate. The second part of the answer concerns Ibadism itself. Ibadi conservative attitudes in preserving the old Islamic tradition kept the buildings, especially the mosques, plain and simple. It is worth pointing out that the main function of the early mosques of Islam was to provide a quiet place where people could worship God without distraction, during the time of prayer. Therefore we can conclude that the people of the Nafusa did not only take their religious thoughts from the East but they were also influenced by the same area in the field of art and architecture.

THE HOUSES OF WIGHU

When visiting wighu one might wonder why such a site was of no interest to so many people. It is also surprising that the Italians, who searched almost everywhere for antiquities, did not take such a place into consideration. At a first glance, the site gives the impression of having been a prosperous city. The architectural aspect of Wighu could be classified as being of high quality, thus making this site important and unique within the Jabal Nafusa .

On this site stand the remains of houses typical of those built all over the Jabal Nafusa during the early Islamic centuries. They are scattered over two hillocks, separated by a small ravine which measures on average about 800m. in width (see fig 149). Nearly every house has another one in front of it dug underground (see fig 157). Most of them share the same size and design; they only differ in minor details. Therefore, it is only necessary to concentrate on one of them; others will be mentioned when needed to show the difference.

THE HOUSE OF THE MIHRAB

This house is not known by this name but it will be so called because it is the only house known so far in the area to have a mihrab It lies almost opposite the mosque towards the north-west of the city (see fig 158). It is of rectangular shape of which the

south- eastern wall measures about 9.90m and the south western wall is 5.40m. The centre of the house is occupied by a courtyard which measures about 23,52 sq . m. in dimension (see ground plan fig 159) (see also ground plan fig 160 for comparison). This courtyard is flanked by rooms to the north- east and southwest. It appears that the whole house with its two storeys was, like others, covered with one barrel vault (see fig 161). Some houses appear to consist of more than two storeys (see fig 162) . The appearance of this house reminds us a great deal of Hamman al-sarakh and Qusayr Amra.(303)

Having no opening in the walls makes the house look like a small fort. Only one house which lies to the west of the mosque has two windows in its façade. Even these windows do not seem to be original (see fig 163).

The house of the mihrab has one entrance in the middle of the south-east wall. It measures 1.30m in width and 2.40 in height and about 1.26m. in thickness (see fig 162). The entrance appears to be quite plain, although it is now partly crumbled away. There could have been some columns, as indeed is the case in a house in the north west of the city (see fig 165). When entering the house on the right-hand side, in the south-east wall, there is a niche. Being in this position it could be nothing else but a mihrab. Although this wall has been restored, the repairs do not seem to have altered its original structure.(304) (see fig 167) This mihrab is the only one to be found in a house in the Jabal and throughout Libya as far as Islamic sites are concerned. We know of some Islamic places which contained a mosque, for example the Umayyad palaces and al-Ukaydar in Iraq.(305) Apart from Sammara, there is no other early Islamic site in which a house containing a mihrab was discovered. Even in Samarra the flat mihrabs which were found in the houses

(303) See kamal al-Din Samih, al- Imara fi sadr al-Islam, (Cairo 1964), see figs. 16,17,20.

(304)Unlike restoration in other places in the Jabal , the people restoring some of the buildings here have preserved the original design. This can be noticed in several restored houses scattered in the site.

(305) Creswell, Early Muslim architecture, vol,11,pp.106,126-7,196.

were rather more decorative elements than real mihrabs.[306] Therefore we could claim that we now have a unique example in early Islamic architecture concerning a house with a mihrab which possibly dates from the 2nd/8th century.

To the north-east side of the courtyard there is a room in the middle which resembles in its shape an ewan (see fig 168). Its entrance measures about 1m in width and 1.84m in height. It is flanked each side by a recess which measures at the base about 30 cms. And its height is about 35cms. When facing the room, actually the recess on the right-hand side has the shape of a pointed horse-shoe arch (see fig 168). As for the room, it is of a rectangular shape of which the south-east wall is about 1.60m and the north-east one is about 2 m. As are all the other rooms in the house, it is covered with a barrel vault. This very room is attached on each side by a smaller room. When facing them, the small room to the left-hand side measures about 2.10 square metres in dimension, while the room to the right-hand side is about 1.43 square metres. The latter room contains the stairs leading to the second storey which is now in ruins. Each of these rooms has an entrance which measures about 55 cms. In width and 95 cms. In height (see fig 168).

To the north-west of the courtyard there is only one room which measures about 6.30 squre metres. Its entrance is about 90 cms. In width and 1.10m in height (see fig 169) .Two small stone platforms were found at each end of this room. The most interesting features are the stones which project from the south-west wall of the courtyard. They are situated to the left-hand side when looking at the entrance to this room (see fig 170). These stones remind us of those wooden slabs found in the storehouses of

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[306] E. Herzfeld Die Ausgrabungen von Samarra, 1,Der Wandschmuck der Bauten von Samarra und seine OrnMENTIK, Berlin, 1923pp181, 225, Abb, 259, 260, 316,pls . LX11, c/281.

Excavation at Samarra, 1936-39, Baghdad, 1940 Part 1, p.24, pl.LVII,also B. Francis &N. Naqshabandi, al-Maharib al-Qadima, Sumer, VII, 1951, P. 213, PL.1,2, CF. c.k. Williame, Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.S.11, 1944, PP. 284, 286. SEE ALSO F.Shafi'I, op. cit, p. 622.

the Jabal. There is no doubt that they were used to reach the second storey on this side, which could have been used for storage. What confirms this suggestion is the fact that there is no trace of a storehouse in the site.

As we mentioned before, most of the houses share the same design and basic architectural features. Some of these houses have two ewans instead of one and they all differ as far as the number of recesses is concerned (see fig 171). The technique applied in building the houses is quite interesting. They built thick walls out of clay, then they covered them with almost square, well-cut stones (see fig 172).

Again it seems that the basics of the typical Islamic house in the East inspired the people of Nafusa when constructing the houses of Wighu. The houses (Bayts) found in al-Mashatta, Qasr al-Tuba and al-Ukhaydar have a great deal in common with the houses on this site.[307] Wighu, therefore, has to be considered amongst these important Islamic sites in Libya. Excavations on this site will absolutely uncover material which will be of great help in understanding the history of this area.

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[307] Creswell, Early Muslim architecture, vol . 11,pp 147-8, 197-8. See also F. Shafi'I, op. cit. pp. 186-9.

V

AL - KANISIYYA - UMM AL - TUBUL - ABU KAR

CHAPTER V

AL-KANISIYYA, UMM AL-TUBUL, ABU-KAR

The area of Tmizda lies approximately 16 kilometres to the west of the town of Jadu. As are the neighbouring areas, Tmizda is renowned for its undulating land; its fertile soil and its plentiful olive trees. As far as its old settlements are concerned, this mountain area seems to differ from the other areas to the west of the Jabal Nafusa discussed earlier in that the ancient villages in the vicinity of Tmizda were built on or between small hillocks and without defence structures. This may be due, on the one hand to the position of these villages in the middle of the Jabal area, and on the other hand, they are protected by the natural defence barrier provided by the hills which lie towards the north-west. The presence of these hills may have been the reason why all attacks launched against this area failed to succeed in anything but in burning the trees which lay at their foot [308]one of the main characteristics of this area is the large number of ruins which can be found scattered about. Therefore the aim of this chapter will be to concentrate on some of these monuments in order that this may help to verify other aspects discussed concerning Jabal Nafusa.

THE MOSQUE OF AL-KANISIYYA

About 12 kilometres west along the road from Jadu , there is a junction where the Jadu road meets a road running northward to Tmizda . 3 km along this road, on the left-hand side, lies the mosque of Al-kanisiyya. Sources, including Al-Shammakhi, who listed this mosque as one of the most venerated in Jabal Nafusa, provide us with little information despite the importance and fame of Al-kanisiyya in this area.[309]_It is possible that the reason for this lack of information is due to the proximity of

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(308) A.Y.Mu'Ammar, op. cit, Part 11,P.205.

(309) Al-Shammakhi, al-siyar, p. 599. see also R. Basset, op. cit, p. 91.

Al- kanisiyya to Jadu, the capital city of Jabal Nafusa, [310] and accordingly Jadu attracted much of the attention away from the provincial area of Tmizda.

Al-kanisiyya, or Al-kanisa, الكنيسة means a church in Arabic. This mosque, unlike many others in the Jabal, has preserved most of its original structure. This preservation may be due to the fine quality of the stone and the actual size and style of the building. Such an edifice did not require any major restoration by the people of the area or from visitors as was apparent in mosques previously discussed. The mosque of Al-kanisiyya is built of stone and dug into a mound. If it were not for its whitewashed façade and the Roman stones which were placed around the walls on top of the mound, this mosque would be extremely difficult to locate. These stones, however, do not function as sum'a to help locate the actual mosque, but were probably needed in the construction and so were placed in order to help position the area of the mosque (see figs 173,174).

Al-kanisiyya has an almost square plan in which the qibla wall measures approximately 10,25m, the northeastern wall about 10m, whilst the average thickness of the walls is about 60 cm (see ground plan fig 175). The sanctuary consists of four riwaqs covered by barrel vaults which are supported by semicircular arches resting on twelve columns.

There are piers attached to the walls, except on the south-eastern side. As far as the style and construction is concerned, these arches are considered to be the best found so far in the Jabal. Some of these arches rest directly on the columns whilst the remainder have square captilas. As for the bases of the columns, they are of a square shape. The irregularity of these architectural features gives some indication that these stones were reused (see ground plan fig 175) (see also 176,177,178).

The mihrab of the mosque is situated approximately at the centre of the south-eastern wall.It is a plain semicircular niche

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[310] Ibn Hawqal, op. cit, p. 94-5.

which is, unlike the rest of the mosque, built of small rough stones. The flat surface of the back wall of the mihrab reminds us of the one in Tindimmira, the only difference being that the niche in Tindimmira is of a rectangular shape which projects out of the wall towards the south-eastern side.The mihrab of al-kanisiyya measures about 60 cm. in width and 50 cm. in depth. It is evident that the structure of the mihrab does not correspond with the quality of the architecture which can be seen in the building of thearches (see fig 179).

The mihrab as it has been seen in mosques in the Jabal Nafusa is plain in architecture and has hardly any decoration . Nevertheless, the mihrab has always retained its importance as the focal point of attention and subsequently has received the greatest care as far as decoration and architecture is concerned.

This has been seen previously in other mosques such as Abnayan, Tnumayat and Sharwas. Therefore it is probable that at one time the mihrab in the mosque of al-kanisiyya was completely rebuilt.

In front of the mihrab, towards the north-west, can be seen some rectangular stone slabs, some of which were found elsewhere scattered throughout the mosque. It is probable that the floor of this mosque was once covered with these slabs. Such a phenomena has not yet been seen so far in the mosques of the Jabal. Local legend claims, heard in many areas of the Jabal Nafusa, that a man or some men came, one night, from Al-Maghrid and succeeded in secretly uncovering a treasure which lay buried within the mosque. The men left as soon as their task was finished and the damage done to the mosque was not discovered until the next day. Similar legends are also popular, but there we have actual evidence that mihrabs were destroyed when people were looking for treasures. An excellent example is the Masjid-i Jami of Qorveh (seljuq period) where the original stucco mihrab was destroyed some 15 years ago when some people from the village were

looking for treasures behind the mihrab.[311] In the area of Tmizda, however, this story is told in relation to several mosques including Al-kanisiyya, and from what can be seen, in the mosque of Al-kanisiyya, of the rebuilding of the mihrab and the state in which the slabs of stone were left, there is some evidence that deliberate destruction took place in an attempt to find something (see fig 179). Regardless of whoever made the attempt and whatever the result, this popular legend does, as has been seen, contain some fact and importance.In addition to this legend, there is another belief amongst the people of Jabal Nafusa which helps substantiate the essence of the story. The people believed that treasure was buried in the walls of the old mosques if not specifically in the area of the mihrab. The treasure, they said, would be discovered as the mosque disintegrated or collapsed through the course of time and the treasure would serve to help enable the mosque to be rebuilt .Although there is no archaeological evidence of the burying of such a treasure in any of the mosques in Jabal Nafusa, this does not eliminate the possibility of such a widespread legend containing some truth.[312] It must not be forgotten that some of the old mosques in the Jabal Nafusa were deserted long ago and that some underwent restoration. In addition to this there have been no excavations so far in the old sites of Jabal Nafusa, therefore the mystery presented by these legends will be amongst other problems facing any future archaeological studies. In any event, as has been previously mentioned, the mosque of Al-kanisiyya, as other mosques yet to be discussed, does provide indications of deliberate damage and destruction.[313]

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(311) Verbal information was given by Dr G. Fehervari and Dr M.Y. Kiani. See, R. Hillenbrand, oriental Art, vol. XV111, 1972,PP. 1-14. See also R .Hillenbrand, Kunst des orient, x/1-2, 1976, pp. 49, 47.

(312) In the early seventies a man from the Jabal Nafusa found a jar full of silver coins while he was drawing his land. The coins date from the Hafsid period. They are kept at the department of antiquities in Tripoli; but they have not been published yet. For similar coins see al-Nuqud al-Arabiyya fi Tunis, Tunis, 1968, p. 148.

(313) See above, p. 159.

In the south- western corner of the same qibla wall stands the only entrance to the mosque, which measures 56cms. In width by 1,43m. (see fig 180). Here again, as in the mihrab, the architecture of the entrance does not correspond to the sophisticated interior of the mosque. Looking at the whole qibla wall from the outside, it is also noticeable that the wall has been restored, if not completely rebuilt. In addition to this, the position of the entrance itself is unusual for mosques, yet may be due to the situation at that time of the construction. This will become more evident at a later stage.

There is nothing to draw attention to the two other riwaqs which are found towards the north-west, except for some scattered slabs of stone and two small windows in the north-eastern wall (see fig 181).As for the Last riwaq,this appears in the north-western wall, opposite the mihrab and takes the form of a niche with a semicircular arch (see fig 182). A similar feature was found in the mosque of Abu-Yahya in Farsatta. However, in the mosque of Al-kanisiyya there is no possibility of an entrance which had been subsequently blocked, especially looking at the structure of the mound which makes an entrance in this side of the mosque impractical.

In the latter riwaq and looking at this aforementioned niche, there lie to the right-hand side two graves (see fig 183). Having these graves inside the mosque is quite common in the mosques of jabal Nafusa. What attracts attention here, however, is the position inside the sanctuary. These graves lie vertical to the qibla wall instead of the usual position where the graves run parallel to the qibla wall. This phenomena may suggest that these graves are not Islamic but this has yet to be proved by excavation. In any event this is yet an additional problem concerning the origins of this mosque which will be discussed later on.

Attached to the mosque on the south-east side lies a small courtyard.It is of rectangular shape, the northwest wall measuring about 5,30m.and the south-west wall being approximately 7,25m. (see ground plan fig 175).The entrance to this courtyard lies in the

south-east wall,opposite the entrance to the mosque and it measures about 90 cms.In width,(see fig 174) The Roman stones are apparent in this entrance (see fig 184).A room, also rectangular in shape,is attached to the north-east wall. The north-west wall measures approximately 2,40m.and the north-east wall about 3,60m,whilst the width of its entrance,which lies in the south-eastern wall, is approximately 60 cms (see ground plan fig 175) (see also fig 185). Again the existence of a room within the mosques of Jabal Nafusa is quite common, but this room is exceptional in that it lies outside the sanctuary.This room is built of rough stones and is obviously a later addition. Both of these entrances open into another courtyard to the south-east, which appears to be almost rectangular in plan and measures about 50m2 in dimension.In the south-eastern corner of the courtyard lies the cistern of the mosque. Roman stones appear within the wall of this courtyard which is not raised very high above the level of the ground (See fig.186).These stones are particularly evident in the south-west corner. This courtyard again seems to be a later addition to the original structure and probably quite recent. It appears to have been built from debris. Another cistern was found about 20m.to the south-west of the mosque. Its opening is surrounded by pieces of Roman stone,one of which has a plain decoration displaying a rectangular shape in which there are two circles (See figs.186,187). More Roman stones and remains of columns lie around the cistern,as well as around the entire mosque,(See fig . 188).

It appears that the mosque of Al-Kanisiyya, although conforming with the basic characteristics of other mosques in the Jabal , does add several new aspects and at the same time gives rise to certain questions. The rectangular plan which was applied in the mosques of the western part of the Jabal, was attributed to the influence of the Umayyad type of mosque. Here in Al- kanisiyya the plan is square, and such aphenomena is believed to be connected with the early Islamic mosques built in Iraq.[314] The

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[314] Creswell , op . cit , Vol . II . p . 193 .

square plan found in Al-Kanisiyya, however, is not, in itself, adequate proof of direct Iraqi influence on the Jabal. Yet more examples may help to strengthen this theory, especially as historical accounts provide a link between the two areas as early as the 1st /7th century, when students from Jabal Nafusa went to Iraq to be educated there by the founders of Ibadism .[315]

As was shown in previous chapters, the existence of a women's section was considered to be one of the characteristics of the Ibadi mosques in the Jabal Nafusa.In Al-kanisiyya, however, the absence of this feature is apparent. Although a semi-niche was found in the north-western wall which may raise the possibility of a blocked entrance once used by women, there are no remnants of any partition wall inside the mosque, as there are in other mosques which provided a special part of the mosque in which women could pray.

The mosque of Al-Kanisiyya also differs from the other mosques previously discussed in its sophisticated architecture and fine design. Except for the presence of Roman stones in Al-kanisiyya, such quality brings to mind the houses found in Wighu. Some of these Roman stones were used in constructing the mosque whilst others are merely scattered in the surroundings. Certain questions can be raised concerning the origins of these stones. Yet, since no Roman monuments are standing today and historical accounts do not confirm the existence of Roman sites in this area, the problem appears too complex to be solved. However, a possible way of tackling this problem would be to follow the points raised before concerning Christian influence in an attempt to clarify the picture.

Christians remained persecuted by the Romans until the 4th century A.D. when Christianity was adopted as the religion of the state during the time of Constantine. In spite of the fact that this event was a great relief for the Christians of North Africa, including Libya, it was at the same time, the start of a new

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(315) Al- Shammakhi, al-siyar, pp. 123-4.

problem. This problem was created as a result of controversial opinions concerning the position of priests who, during the period of persecution, abandoned Christianity or handed over sacred books to be burned. As a result the Donatists appeared in North Africa, having their churches side by side with the Catholics. Sources confirm that the adoption of Donatism was widespread amongst the Berbers, including the people of Jabal Nafusa. It seems that this occurrence was not only due to religious conflict but also that Donatism represented a form of rejection of Roman rule which was supported by the Catholic Church .[(316)] This may explain the reason why the people of Jabal Nafusa did not respond to help the Romans in Tripoli at the time of the Arab conquest.[(317)]

In any event, what is of concern is the fact that the past had left its mark on Jabal Nafusa. The name Al-Kanisiyya for example, is a name which is not limited to this mosque in Tmizda. There are other mosques which bear the same name and it is probable that these were originally churches before they were converted into mosques. There are also other mosques in the Jabal which were known by the name of Taghlis. This name was taken from the Latin ecclesia, meaning a church. In addition to this, several mosques in the Nafusa area bear the name of Al-Hawariyyin الحواريين an Arabic word meaning the companions of Jesus Christ (Apostles).[(318)] It seems that the decline of Christianity was gradual after the Arab conquest, but was accelerated in the 2nd/8th century during the time when the Muslims In Jabal Nafusa adopted Ibadism . What adds to this belief is the fact that some families during the 2nd/3rd/8th/9th centuries had Christian ancestors, as well as the name of the people themselves which indicates Christian influence .[(319)]

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(316) D. Haynes, op. cit, pp. 55-7. T. Lewicki, op. cit. pp. 39, 50. See also Abu Dabbuz, op. cit, part I, pp. 406-9.

(317) See Chapter I, p 22.

(318) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar , pp . 598-600 . T.Lewicki , op . cit , p . 56 , See also R . Basset , op . cit , p . 426 .

(319) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, pp. 255-6. See also D. Haynes, op. cit, pp 34-40.

Such facts indicate the apparent Christian influence in the area and following this it is therefore highly probable that the mosque of Al-Kanisiyya was built on the ruins of a church. Perhaps this theory could be taken further, taking into consideration the quantity of Roman stones which appear on the site, by suggesting that the church itself re-used the stones of a Roman building, [320] which may have been built on the very site or in the vicinity. This suggestion, however, may hold stronger ground when discussing the next two mosques. In addition to all this, historical accounts confirm that the Romans had established their rule in this area for a long period. Since this area was famous for its fertile land as well as its richness represented by olive trees, it is therefore possible that some sort of settlements were established in this area during the Roman period.

Since no inscriptions or other finds were discovered, the dating of the mosque has been intentionally left to the very end in order to study all the elements which may help to indicate an approximate date. Al- Shammakhi's reference to this mosque did not connect it with any historical event,[321] thus this may prove that Al-Kanisiyya did exist during the 9th/15th century. Shammakhi, however, used every available source in gathering his information and he listed this mosque amongst the most venerated mosques in Jabal Nafusa, some of which were connected to a certain extent,with historical accounts dating from the 2nd/3rd/ 8th/9th centuries.[322] Therefore, bearing in mind the style of architecture as well as the kind of stones used in the construction, and finally the Christian influence, it is probable that the mosque dates from this period, if not from earlier.

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(320) The columns found in the sanctuary and around the mosque resemble a great deal what was found in Roman sites . See, Libya Antiqua , Vol. v, 1968, pl. XL, figs. A, b, c, d, pl. LI, fig. b.

(321) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, P. 599.

(322) Al-Shammakhi, al-Siyar, pp. 554-5.

THE MOSQUE OF UMM AL-TUBUL

This mosque is situated about 6 kilometres to the north-east of Al-Kanisiyya. As other old mosques in this vicinity, it dominates a hillock overlooking vast area of olive trees in all directions.

The Umm Al-Tubul, as is Al-Kanisiyya and other mosques, is situated in a deserted and isolated position. Thus, this may lead us to think that these mosques were originally countryside mosques. Such a phenomena has been seen before in the Lamzab area of southern Algeria.[323] In fact when exploring the area, old deserted settlements can be found. Today evidence of these old settlements is indicated by the remains of foundations and a large amount of scattered stones on the sites not far from the mosques, as is the case in the western part of Jabal Nafusa. The possibility of such buildings having existed cannot be eliminated for it is possible that they suffered the same consequences as the old settlements. In addition to this the removal of stones from old buildings to be used in new constructions is not a strange event in the Jabal .[324] The spread of agriculture and the constant need for land in the area could be another factor in explaining the disappearance of these buildings . In any event, excavations in this area would help to throw some light upon this matter . stones used, together with the continuous restoration carried out by the people who regarded these buildings as venerated and respected .

The mosque of Umm Al-Tubul is also known locally by the name تاالسحاق "Ta Ishak" which means "The Mosque of Isaac" Historically speaking this name does not provide any clues yet it could be listed among other names, suchas Al-Kanisiyya, Taghlis and Al-Hawariyyin . All these namesm as has been previously mentioned, are partly the result of Christian influence .[325] Apart from this, no historical information concerning this mosque is provided by the sources available. Therefore, it is hoped that the fieldwork study will help to clarify the picture .

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(323) M. Roche, op. cit, p 75.

(324) See chapter IV , pp . 143 .

(325) See above p . 165 .

Apart from the collapse of the vaults in the north-east side, the mosque of Umm Al-Tubul is still very well preserved . Although build mainly of large well-cut stones, this mosque has still undergone a certain amount of restoration work. Part of work can be seen in the two attached piers which reinforce the qibla wall (See figs.189,190). As Al-Kanisiyya, this mosque has an almost square plan in which the qibla wall measures about 10m . and the north-east wall approximately 9,10m. The north-west is about 9.85m. and the south-west wall is 10.10m, whilst the average thickness of the walls about 65cms. (See ground plan fig.191). The mosque consists of 3 riwaqs covered by 3 barrel vaults running parallel to the qibla wall, and are supported by two arcades from which 4 arches originally spring. The mihrab of the mosque lies approximately in the middle of the qibla wall and measures about 70cms. In width and 1m. in depth. It is flanked on both sides as well as at the top by a strip of stucco decoration displaying plant motifs, which seem to be the result of restoration work. What draws attention here is the collapsed section of the mihrab which has resulted in an opening in the niche itself (See fig .192) It is evident that this damage was caused deliberately and this brings to mind the mihrab in the mosque of Al-Kanisiyya and its scattered floor stones. This may add weight to the legend mentioned previously concerning the hunt for buried treasure in mosques.[(326)]

Looking at the mihrab there are two decorated stones in the qibla wall, on the left-hand side. The decoration on each consists of a flower with12 petals, (see fig 193). This decoration is identical to that found in both the mosque of Abnayan and Tindimmira.[(327)] It is clear that the present position of these stones is due to the restoration work which took place at one time at the mosque . From what has been seen in both mosques previously mentioned, it could be suggested that these stones originally flanked the mihrab. Restoration work again has produced 4 arches vertical to the qibla

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(326) See above, p. I59.

(327) See chapter III, p. IOI.

wall (see figs 194,195). This type of restoration is quite common in the old mosques of Jabal Nafusa. It is relevant to mention here that, although this served the purpose of reinforcing and preserving the mosques, at the same time such restoration sometimes detracted from the original structure of the mosque and caused the disappearance of certain original architectural features as well as decoration.

The entrance to the mosque is in the north-east side of the qibla riwaq. It measures about 85 cms. In width and 1.28m. in height (see fig 190). Opposite the entrance, in the south-west wall and at height of 1,83m, there is a geometrical decoration scraped into a later stucco background. This decoration displays a rectangular shape, in the centre of which is a circle crossed diagonally by 2 lines which connect the 4 corners of the rectangle (see figs 194,196). At the bottom of the rectangle, in the left-hand corner, there is another almost rectangular shape attached. It is evident that this decoration represents the sanctuary of Mecca. Although this is a result of later restoration , the fact remains that this is the only example to be found, not only in Jabal Nafusa, but throughout the Islamic sites discovered in Libya so far.[(328)]

In the middle riwaq, to the north-east side , there appears another decorated stone situated directly on top of the column (See fig 197). The decoration here is the same type of desingn, that is the flower, found in the qibla wall. It seems that there was originally a complete set of these stones,[(329)] the remains of which may have been used, in the mosque of Umm Al-Tubul, for restoration if they were not taken away by the people as happened in Sharwas and , on a larger scale, in Wighu.[(330)]The positioning of this decorated stone indicates that it has been removed from its

[(328)] The rectangular stone and stucco decoration depicting the sanctuary in Mecca recalls the tiles made in Iznik . These tiles date from the 16th and 17th century. This decoration in Jabal Nafusa could be a Turkish influence. See, Erdmann, Ars Orientalis, Vol . III, 1959, PP. 192-97.

[(329)] See above, pp. 73-4.

[(330)] See chapter IV,P.143 .

original setting. This strengthens the suggestion that these stones were once flanking the mihrab as is the case in the mosque of Abnayan where four such stones can be seen on each side.[331]

As for the decoration itself, it is almost identical to what was found in Abnayan, Tindimmira and Sharwas. Therefore the discussion and conclusion concerning these decorations could be applied to this decorative element in the mosque of Umm al-Tubul.

Again, as in Al-Kanisiyya, Roman stones were used in the construction of this mosque. They are apparent in the columns as well as in the restoration work carried out in the north- east arcade. This restoration employed two large olive press stones . Roman stones are again evident in a spiral column and in a few Roman capitals, (See figs 198, 199).

This restoration work has produced a partition wall which in many ways resembles the partition found in the mosque of Sharwas.[332] Taking into consideration the small opening in the north-west corner of the mosque, it is probable that the north-west riwaq was once used by women.There fore the mosque of Umm Al-Tubul,unlike Al-Kanisiyya,retains one of the most characteristic features of the Ibadi mosques in the Jabal . In any event, this part of the partition wall appears as an addition and not as part of the original plan .

Still in the north-western riwaq, the fall of moulding from part of the wall on the south-west side has uncovered layers of brickwork (See fig 200) . It was later discovered that in at least this part of the south-west wall of the mosque, a layer of bricks was used to construct the interior wall whilst the exterior wall was built of stones . This is , however, the only case in the Jabal , when bricks were used in the construction of a building . It is beyond doubt that bricks were not used in the western part of Jabal Nafusa. Nevertheless, it cannot be suggested that they were not used at least on a small scale in other parts of the area, since bricks were found

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(331) See chapter III,P.73 .
(332) See chapter IV, P. I22 .

in the mosque of Umm Al-Tubul and it is probable that they would be brought in from an area outside Jabal Nafusa . What supports this suggestion is the fact that the people of Jabal Nafusa had contact throughout Islamic history with the people of other parts of Libya and Tunisia where bricks were employed in building.

In spite of this one could not eliminate the possibility that the bricks found in this mosque could be made in the area of the Jabal itself . What supports this hypothesis is the fact that some kilns have been already found in the Nafusa area , as was the case in Farastta .(333) In addition to that is the type of clay, used in the making of bricks, which could be found in the area . In any event, the making and use of bricks in the buildings of Jabal Nafusa remains a field yet to be researched in detail.

It is evident that the mosque of Umm Al-Tubul basically does conform with the general characteristics of the mosques of the Jabal . Yet the square plan of this mosque, which resembles that of Al-Kanisiyya, strengthens the suggestion of Iraqi influence which was mentioned earlier on. The absence of archaeological evidence makes it difficult to state an exact date for the construction of this mosque, although its name, Ta Ishak (Isaac), indicates Christian influence. The appearance of Roman stones once more indicates on one hand the age of the mosque and on the other hand raises once again the possibility of the existence of a pre-Islamic building. Finally the decorations which were found in the mosque are of great importance as far as giving an approximate date to the mosque . The same decoration as was previously mentioned was found in 3 other mosques-Abnayan, Tindimmira and Sharwas . All these mosques date back to the 3rd/4th /9th/10th centuries,(334) therefore it is probable that the mosque of Umm Al-Tubul existed during this period. However, an early dating is still debatable.

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(333) See chapter III, P. 89 .

(334) See above, pp. 75, 1032 .

THE MOSQUE OF ABU-KAR

This mosque is situated about 3 kilometres to the northeast of Al-Kanisiyya . As for the mosque of Umm Al-Tubul and others in the area , historical resources do not offer anything concerning the mosque of Abu-Kar. As for the people living in the vicinity, they know nothing about Abu-Kar himself nor about the history of this mosque except that it is a venerated mosque and a popular place for visitors .

This mosque, like several others in this area, is situated on a small hillock overlooking olives. It is also, like others, standing in isolation (See fig 201).on first glance this mosque appears to have undergone major restoration in which Roman stones were used extensively especially in the qibla wall (See fig 202). One of these stones is decorated . It lies at the south-west corner of the qibla wall and measures about 39 cms . in length, 29 cms. in width and is about 8 cms thick.The carved decoration represents a man ploughing the land with the aid of a camel and in front another person sowing seeds (see fig 203). This scene is identical to decorations on stones now housed in the museum of Tripoli, they also display agricultural activities and scenes from daily life . These stones were originally found in the town of Gherza which is situated some 300 kilometres to the south of Tripoli and dates back to the 3rd/4th century A.D.[(335)] This great resemblance may lead us to suggest that the decorated stone found in Abu-Kar is part of a set used perhaps to elaborate a Roman tomb, as was the case in Gherza.

The mosque has a rectangular plan and its south-east wall measures about 7m and the north-east wall about 4,15 m . whilst the average thickness of the walls is approximately 70 cms. (see ground plan fig 204). It consists of 2 riwaqs covered by barrel vaults running parallel to the qibla wall. The vaults are supported in the middle with an arcade from which 3 arches spring . They in turn rest on piers, except on the north-east side where part of

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(335) D. Haynes, op. cit, pp. 53-7 .

a column appears. Other piers are apparent attached to the walls except on the south-west side (see figs 204,205). There appears to be a blocked entrance in the south-west corner of the mosque (see fig 202). The present entrance is situated in the south-west side of the qibla wall. It has a rather small corridor which measures about 1,50 m. in length and 75 cms in width .This unusual entrance being placed in the qibla wall is the second such example; the first is Al-Kanisiyya .[336]

Behind the mosque towards the north-west and at an approximate distance of 2,50 m there lie the remains of a wall which is not raised high above the level of the ground . It runs from north-east to south-west and measures about 10,25 m (see fig 206). Although the mosque of Abu-Kar is called as such and was meant to be a place for prayer, there is cause for doubt since there is no mihrab . Due to the remains of the wall behind the mosque it may be assumed that there was, at one time, a third riwaq, and at the same time, its extension towards the south-west provides a clue to the possibility of another wall extending from the south-east to the north-east. In order to verify this possibility a small excavation was carried out in the south-west side of the mosque close to the cistern.

The result was positive and the remains of a wall was discovered as expected . The remains of this wall lie about 1,75 m from the south-west wall, (see fig 207).It therefore became apparent that this mosque also had originally an almost square plan, as is the case in Al-Kanisiyya and Umm Al-Tubul . From this result it became clear that the mosque had extended to the south-west.This conclusion made it possible to locate the position of the mihrab which usually occupies the centre of the qibla wall. Therefore emphasis was placed on the present entrance which, in fact, gave rise to some questions concerning the length of the corridor . Subsequently work was carried out in an attempt to trace remains in the area of the entrance. Again the result was the

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[336] See above ,p. I60 .

appearance of remains of a semi-circular shape found to the south-east of the entrance (see fig 208). It was, therefore, evident that this was the remains of the niche, possibly of the original mihrab. Therefore, the name mosque given to this building is correct according to archaeological evidence (see fig 204).

As for the two mosques discussed earlier, certain elements offer us to establish at least an approximate date for these buildings. However, the case here seems to be different. It has been noted that the mosque of Abu-kar standing today seems to be a result of major restoration, this may be due to some deliberate damage having takingplace, as that which occurred in both mosques previously discussed . Nevertheless, two main factors, the square plan and the use of Roman stones, which only appear in old mosques, may suggest that the original mosque of Abu-Kar dates back to the same period as Al-Kanisiyya and Umm Al-Tubul .

From what has been discussed so far, the mosques in the middle region of the Jabal Nafusa reveal the most important characteristics of Ibadi mosques, notably the absence of the minbar, the minaret and the lack of decoration .

In spite of the restoration work which several of the mosques in this region have undergone, they still contain in their names, as well as in their architectural features, some marks relating to the past which this area has witnessed . These Islamic sites have shown Roman and Christian influence and the adoption of Ibadism. The latter appears to be a turning point in the history of the Nafusa.

It may also have been the main motivating factor behind an attempt to be rid of all that was not connected with Islam. This attitude led to converting churches into mosques or building on its ruins, or establishing new mosques built of Roman stones when they were available. By the $2^{nd}/8^{th}$ century these non-Islaic buildings had become meaningless to the people .

VI
INSCRIPTIONS

CHAPTER VI
INSCRIPTION

A number of inscriptions were mentioned whilst discussing the old mosques in the Jabal Nafusa in the preceding chapters; the style of which was left to be discussed in this chapter. Although they were not numerous, nor different in variety, they are still of considerable importance . On the one hand it is possible that they may serve to throw some light on the question of the confirmation of the dates concerning some of these mosques, and on the other hand they represent a different aspect of Islamic art in the Jabal Nafusa .

It is a well-know fact that Arabic writing, according to what was found of Nabatean inscription, originated from the regions of al-Hira الحيرة and al-Anbar الأنبار Al-Hijaz, however, played an important role in the development of Arabic writing .(337) Two types of Arabic script were developed in this ares . One is attributed to al-Madina and the other to Mecca .(338) In the year 17 / 638, the city of al-Kufa, in Iraq, was established by order of the second khalif Umar b al-khattab . It was located not far from the old civilized city of Al-Hira. The Arabs who came from Al-Madina to this new city brought with them their own script. There it further developed and underwent new innovations, and it became known as the kufic script . It was common that the kufic script was angular in character الخط الكوفي اليابس in contrast to the rounded type الخط الكوفي المبسوط In other words, it was the same advanced Arabic script which was known in the north of al-Hijaz, the only difference being that it was a more developed form to such an extent that it differed from that of the two main scripts used in Al-Hijaz .

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(337) See Salah al-Din al-Munajjid, Etudes de paleographie Arabe, Beirut,1972,pp.12,14,19. See also, Aida Arif, Arabic Lapidary Kufic in Africa, Amman,1966, p.6.cf. Nabia Abbot, The rise of north Arabic script , Chicago,1947 p.6.

(338) Nadim Muhammad Ibn Ishaq, Kitab al Fihrist, Cairo, 1905, pp. 6-7. See al Munajjid, op. cit, p. 23.

Amongst the inhabitants of the city of Al-Kufa were the Suryans السريان who came from the area surrounding Al-Hira. It was most likely that the Muslim artists saw the Syriac script, which they then applied to their primitive Hijazi script.[339] The military, political and cultural position of Al-Kufa also had an important role in developing this new type of script. It was therefore imitated and spread. In addition to this, Iraq and the new Islamic provinces in Persia in the Umayyad period were administrated by Al-Kufa .[340]

Al-Qalqashandi stated that the variety of kufic scripts derived originally from two main types, one being Al-Taquir التقوير and the other Al-Mabsut المبسوط The first is rounded with its arraqat bending down the base line as Al-Thuluth الثلث and Al-Riq a الرقعة The second, lacking the bends of the former, is Al-Muhaqqaq.[341] This confirms that kufic is not all angular but that there were also rounded types of kufic . This would lead us to believe that both types, the angular and the rounded, derived from the developed Nabataean script and were used by the Arabs in Al-Hijaz . Therefore, the term kufic cannot be understood to cover only the angular type of script .This fact was further established after the discovery of the remains of Grafitti script, which dates back to the Umayyad period . This conclusion, however, does not mean in any way that kufic represented a stage of development towards cursive script. It seems more probable that they were contemporary and influenced each other during the course of their development. We find the cursive script widely used in manuscripts. The kufic, by its nature, was more suitable for use on stones. Therefore it was used on tombstones, milestones and on important buildings. In this line the kufic, or its other types, was

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(339) Kadhim al0Jnabi, Takhtit al-kufa, Baghdad, 1967, p. 26. Abbot, 0p. cit, 17 .
A. Arif, op cit, pp. 11-13. cf. Al-Qalqashandi Adu al Abbas Ahmad, Subh al-A'asha fi Sina at al-Insha, Cairo 1913, vol. III, P. 12. See also Hajje khalifa ibn Abd Allah, kashf al-Dhunun, Cairo, 1885, vol II, P. 355.Ahmad b. Yahya al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan, Cairo, 1956-7, vol. I, p. 471 .

(340) Al- Bunajjad, op. cit, p. 78 .

(341) Al-Qalqashandi, op. cit, vol. III, P 15.

the most popular for many centuries to come.[342] Accordingly, the monumental kufic spread and was used on a large scale by Muslim artists. The limitation in the figural field gave the Muslim artist the impetus to innovate the monumental scripts. Such innovation produced variations of kufic script, the development of which carried on to reach its zenith by the 5th,6th /11th,12th century. It is safe to say that kufic script, however, became an important element in the unity of Islamic art. Such a phenomenon can be observed in the entire area conquered by the Muslims.[343]

These different types of kufic script gave rise to an immense amount of discussion, especially concerning the foliated and floriated kufic. Professor Grohmann divided kufic into the following eight types:-

1- Plain or primitive kufic
2- Kufic with elaborated apices.
3- Foliated kufic.
4- Floriated kufic.
5- Plated or interlaced kufic.
6- Bordered kufic.
7- Architectural kufic.
8- Rectangular kufic.[344]

The floriated kufic, which was admired by professor Grohmann, became known to the scholars through Chardin in the first quarter of the 18th century A.D. This happened when two kufic inscriptions, dated 348/959 and 392/1001, were discovered in Persia, and were brought to the west.[345]

To professor Grahmann, the foliated kufic was characterized by the decoration of the apices of the letters, displayed in

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(342) AL-Munajjad, 0p. cit, p. 114.A , Arif , op.cit . pp. 9, 10. cf. al-Qalqashandi, op. cit, vol. III, P.15. See also Abbot, op. cit, p. 16 .

(343) G. Marcais, Manuel D'art Musulman, Paris, 1927, p. 71. See also, S. Flury, Une Formule Enigraphoque de la Ceramique Cerchaique de L'Islam , Paris, 1927, p, 253. Reproduced by Grohmann in A. o., vol. II, P. 184.

(344) a. Grohmann, The origin and early development of floriated kufic A. O, vol. II; 1957, P. 183. Cf. Flury, Ornamental kufic inscriptions on pottery in Survey of Persian Art, p. 1743.

(345) A. Arif, op. cit, p. 24. Cf. j. Chardin, Voyage en perse, Amsterdam, 1711, vol. III, P. 118.

half-palmettes and two or three lobed leaves, as well as the bifurication of the endings of the letters which could extend even to initial and final letters. Floriated kufic, although it retains the same decoration, has in addition floral motifs. Therefore the most important characteristic of floriated kufic is that tendrils and perfect arabesques form a background from which the letters appear to grow.[346] W. and G.Marcais were the first to tackle the problem of the origin of the floriated kufic. They stated that the angular kufic, known as carmatian, occurred for the first time in Tunisia in 341/953. It then traveled to Egypt, perhaps with the Fatimids. Marcais also added that Tunisian inscriptions usually show types which are very fine and on the whole the floriated kufic is more delicate than any other.[347]

Soon afterwards another different theory came to be known after the discovery of the famous Stele of Tashqand, dated 230/844. Such a theory led some scholars to believe that the floriated kufic came to Egypt from the East.[348]

This theory, however, was met by some objections. J.karabacek and Herzeld stated that the Tashqand Stele was only a copy of a stone originally dated 230/844. Moreover, it corresponded with a second tombstone published by Hartmann from the same museum and dated 541/1146.[349] As a matter of fact when comparing the tombstone of Tashqand with the tombstone from Al-Qayrawan, it is obvious that both karabacek and Herzeld were correct. The inscriptions of the Tashqand Stele appear to be closer to cursive than kufic .

Professor Grohmann believed that the steps towards achieving the highest standard of floriated kufic took place in Egypt. Examples of this were to be found in the mosque of Al-Hakin, 393/1003. Further progress in the evolution of the

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(346) A. Grohmann, A.O. vol. . II, P . 183, Cf, Flury, Survey, p, 1743 .

(347) W. and G. Marcais, Le monuments arabes de Tlemcen, paris, 1903, pp. 87, 88. See also Grahmann, A.O, vol. II, P. 184.

(348) Grohmann, A. O, vol. II, PL. 1, FIG. 1. See also A Arif, op. cit, pp. 26. 27.

(349) Grohmann, A.O., vol. II, P. 185.

floriated kufic was to be made in neighbouring countries. For instance, in Palestine and Alhijaz.[350] In North Africa the best example can be found in Bab-Tunis in Al-Qayrawan, dated 437 / 1045.[351]

We are rather inclined to agree with professor Grohmann, as far as Egypt's role in the development of floriated kufic is concerned. Yet one cannot disagree with Arif's suggestion who claimed that the Arabs conquered Mesopotamia, Persia, Syria, Egypt and North Africa Simultaneously. Therefore, she assumes, kufic script developed in all these countries more or less at the same time following the pattern of the Sasanian, Byzantine, Hellenistic and Coptic arts, which could be found in all these countries as well as in the kufic script. She carries on to say that in every country mentioned the script continued to develop almost in isolation, little influenced by development in any neighbouring state. Furthermore it must not be supposed that the development of these general principles was the work of one man, or one generation, one century, or even a shorter period.[352]

The inscriptions found in Jabal Nafusa , however, are going to be judged according to what was mentioned above concerning the variation of kufic script. By discussing these inscriptions in further detail it is hoped that futher light may be shed upon them .

Apart from discussing the inscriptions in more detail, the idea is to illustrate their relation to the buildings in which they were found. Thus, this may strengthen the suggestion concerning the dates of these mosques which were based on historical and architectural evidence.

When discussing the buildings of Jabal Nafusa previously,a geographical order was followed. In this chapter, however, the inscriptions will be dealt with according to their importance and their chronological position .

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(350) Ibid, p. 208. See also, E. kuhnel, Islamiche Schriftkunst, Berlin, 1942, p. 14.
(351) Grohmann, A.O, vol. II, P. 209, FIG. 23 .
(352) A. Arif, op. cit, pp. 28, 29 .

THE INSCRIPTIONS OF THE MOSQUE OF SHARWAS
TNSCRIPTIONS NO 1.

These inscriptions were found on three blocks of limestones which measure an average 28 × 32 cms. They are placed on the arch above the partition wall, exactly opposite the mihrab (see fig 209). When facing these inscriptions, the one on the right-hand side consists of five lines and it reads as follows:-

(أشـــــهد) أ (ن) لا
إلـــه إلا اللــــه و
أن محمد (ا) عبد (ه)
ورســـــولــــه و
مـــا جـاء بـه حـق

I testify that there is no
God but Allah and
That Muhammad is his servant
And his apostle and
What he brought is truth .

The first four lines are from the known phrase of the Shahada, a confession of belief . This phrase usually occurs on Islamic coins. As for the last line, that could be characteristic to the inscriptions of Jabal Nafusa .

The inscription that lies on the middle stone consists of four lines:-

ما (شــاء) الله قضـا
ولسـ..... مـن الـهـلـه
قســــم ولا حـــول
ولا قـــوة إلا بالـــله

Whatever God wills, happens .
.... is from God .
Shar ! And there is no relief .
And no releave but with God .

It is noticeable here that the stone is worn away in places which made it difficult to define the original words. The misuse of very well-knpwn Arabic sayings is also noticeable. The last word in the first line should be Kana (take place) while the last word in

the third line should be Hawla (power). This shows that the artist was not competent in the use of the Arabic language. We also notice that the pious phrase in the first line is found to be on the colonnades of the Great Mosque in Tunis (353) and it occurs on a Ziyanid gold coin of Tilimsan. (354) .

As for the inscription on the left-hand side, it consists of four lines and reads as follows :-

وقالـو (ا) الحمـد
للـه الـذي صـد
قنا وعده وأو (ر) ثنا
الأرض نتبوأ من الجنة

"And they shall answer, Praise be
to God who hath performed
His promise onto us and hath made us to inherit
The Earth that we may dwell in Paradise ."

(Qur. Xxx ix, 74)

Despite the fact that this inscription is a Quranic phrase, it is again noticeable that the word قالوا Qalu, in the first line, is mis-spelt, as well as the word wa-awrthana in the third line .

These three inscriptions of simple kufic can be compared with an inscription found on a tombstone kept in the Islamic Museum in Cairo. It bears the number 2721 / 377 and it is dated 272 / 880.(355) The similarity is evident in the style of writing in the following letters:-

ha, jim, kha, dal, ra, waw, mim and the word Allah.

INSCRIPTION NO. 2

Within the partition wall, just beneath the previous inscriptions, there is another small arch opposite the mihrab. Its keystone measures about 32 cms. At the base and approximately 62

(353) B. Roy and P.POINSSOT, Inscriptions arabes de kairouan, Paris , 1950, pp. 12,47 .

(354) H. Hazard, The Numismatic history of late Medieval North Africa, New York, 1952, p. 184 .

(355) M. Gaston Wiet, Catalogue due Musee ArBE Steles Funeraires, Cairo, 1936, vol. IV. Pl. . 1 no. 1201 .

cms. In height. A flower surrounded by series of small circle decorations in the centre of the stone, is flanked by two small Catherine Wheel motifs. The whole design is enclosed in an ornamental frame composed of arches, chevrons and beads (see fig. 210). A kufic inscription was carved at the top of this keystone. The left-hand end of the first two lines has been chipped away. The inscription consists of three lines :-

(قولوا) آمنا بالله وما أنزل إلينا وما أنزل إلى إبراهيم وإسماعيل (وإسحاق).
ويعقوب والأسباط وما أوتي موسى وعيسى وما أوتي النبيون من (ربهم) .
لا نفـــــــرق بين أحد منـــــــهم ونحـــــــن له مسلمـــــون .

1- "We believe in God and that which hath been sent down to us and that which had been sent down to Ibraham and Ismail and (Isac).
2- And Jacob and that which was delivered unto Mosses and Jesus and that which was delivered unto the prophets from their Lord.
3- We make no distinction between any of them and unto God we are resigned ."

This kind of kufic style is known to be an imitation of the monumental kufic of the 3rd/ 4th / 9th/10th century. Such a style was used on large scale on Islamic buildings at that time. A parallel can be drawn between this inscription in Sharwas and the inscription found on the Nilometer on Roda Island. The latter, however, is dated 247/861.(356) A greater similarity is evident when comparing this inscription found on the façade of the mosque of Thalathat Biban in Al-Qayrawan.(357) The Al-Qayrawan inscription dates from 252/866. The similarity is so great that it is difficult to distinquish between the two when examining both inscriptions carefully. The inscription in Al-Qayrawan, however, seems to be more elegant .

(356) Creswell, op. cit, part II, PLS. 80, 81.
(357) Ibid, Pi. 93 .

INSCRIPTION NO .3

This inscription is set in the wall of the middle riwaq, only a few metres to the north-east of the inscription previously discussed. It was carved on a rectangular block of limestone and measures about 46 ×32 cms. Looking at the inscription, a pattern of arches and chevrons decorate the right-hand side. Although the upper left-hand corner is worn and cracked, fortunately this did not prevent complete decipherment of the inscription. As for the border of the inscription, it bears geometrical motifs displaying zig-zag lines both at the top and at the bottom (see fig. 211). The inscription itself consists of three lines and reads as follows:-

رضينا بالله لذي ليـــس
كمثله ربا وبالإســــلام
الذي لا يقبل غيره دينا

"We take delight in God who has no
identical and in Islam
which is the sole religion to be accepted."

The style of this inscription again appears to be an imitation of the monumental kufic of the 3-4/9-10th century. In any event, this inscription is categorized as plain kufic which is quite similar to inscription No.2. The only difference is that inscription No.3 is larger in size .

The riwaq next to the middle one towards the northwest is rich with inscriptions. Four inscriptions are to be found on the arch which lies opposite the mihrab. Their position is similar to inscription No.1. What follows is a discussion of these inscriptions in sequence bearing in mind the arrangement when facing them from right to left .

INSCRIPTION NO.4

This, as were most of the rest of the inscriptions, was carved on a rectangular block of limestone which measures about 31×34 cms. The inscription is surrounded by a hatched border (see fig.212). It consists of four lines:-

أشهـــد أن لا
إله إلا اللــه و
أن محمدا عبد
ه ورســـوله

"I testify that there is no
God but God and
That Muhammad is his servant
And his apostle".

INSCRIPTION NO. 5

Again this inscription is carved on a rectangular stone which measures approximately 49 × 32 cms. In addition to its hatched border, the top and the lower part are decorated by zig-zag lines (see fig. 213). The inscription consists of five lines and reads as follows:-

يـــا أيـــها الـــذيـــن آمنـــو
ا اصبـــــــروا وصــــــا
بـــــــروا ورابـــــــطو
ا واتقـــــــوا اللـــــــــه
لعلكـــــم تفلحــــــــــون

Oh, true believers
Be patient and strive to excel.
In patience be constant-minded
And fear God
That ye may be happy."

(Qur.III,200)

It is clear that the last two inscriptions bear the characteristics of the plain kufic which was already defined earlier. However, Naskhi influence is apparent in the style applied for writing the letters: Nuns. Both inscriptions appear to be the work of one artist since they look identical. It is worthwhile pointing out their elegant style when they are compared with inscriptions No.1. In addition to this they have no mis-spellings as occurred in inscriptions No . 1. This does not only suggest that different artists are responsible for the work, but also that they are of different

dates. In other words, inscriptions No.1 seem to be earlier. Both inscription 4 and 5 (see figs.212,213) could be compared with an inscription on a tombstone which is kept in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo.It is registered under No.7206 and is dated 289/902.[358]

The great resemblance becomes even more evident in the writing of the letters : Alif, Ha, and the word Allah. It is noticeable that the inscription on the tombstone is neat and more elegant though the style emphasizes a great resemblance .

INSCRIPTION NO . 6

The inscription here is found on a rectangular block of limestone which measures eq. 34×29 cms. Like the previous inscriptions, it is enclosed within a simple border, but unlike them it is undecorated, (See fig 214). The inscription consists of four lines :-

أشهــد أن لا إلــه
إلا الله وأن محمـد
ا عبـده ورســـو
له وما جاء به حق

"I testify that there is no God
But God and that Muhammad
Is his servant and his apostle
And what he brought is truth ."

This very phrase occurs in inscriptions No.1 (see fig. 209) . As for the style, it is similar to the one applied to inscription No.2 (see fig. 210). That is the imitation of the monumental Kufic of the 3-4/9-10th century. Again the intrusion of Naskhi forms is noticeable, especially in the letters Nuns .

INSCRIPTION NO. 7

It is the last inscription on this arch to the lefthand side. It is carved on an almost square block of limestone which measures

(358) Wiet, op. cit, vol. IV, pl . XXIX .

eq. 32×30 cms. This inscription is surrounded by a simple border which lacks any decoration . The second half of the third line is uncarved and the fourth line, for which a space was provided, was never started (see fig. 214). The inscription as it is consists of three lines and reads as follows :-

قـل هـو اللـــه أ
حد الله الصمـــد
لم يلد ولم (يولد) .

"Say, He is God
One God : the Eternal .
He begets not, neither is he begotten ."
(Qur. CXII, verses 1-3).

This inscription is easily identified as plain Kufic . What may draw attention to its peculiarity is the difference in the sizes of its words . For example, Allah and Huwa. In addition to this, it is incomplete . Faced with this problem, one may come to the conclusion that probably it was carved by an amateur who tried to imitate another artist . His attempt, however, was not successful for he gave it up before finishing. The appearance of this inscription in the mosque does not alter the fact that it was not meant to be used in the mosque . We know already that positions of all the inscriptions in the mosque are not original. Therefore, the inscription in question is more likely a result of one of the restorations which took place at one time. In other words, the restoration work carried out on this mosque was most likely the reason behind its preservation .

INSCRIPTION NO. 8

In the north-east part of the mosque there is an almost square room . Its entrance lies in the south-east wall opening into the sanctuary (see ground plan fig. 113). When facing the entrance, there is , set in the wall, a square block of stone to the left-hand side, 2.20 cms . above ground level. The stone itself measures eq. 42×40 cms . As for the inscription, it is enclosed in a lozenge border. (See fig. 215) It consists of four lines :-

(الإسلا) م ديننــا
ومحمــــد نبينـــا و
القرآن إمــامـــنا
والسنــة طريقـــنا

1- "Islam is our religion
2- And Muhammad is our prophet and
3- The Quran is our Imam
4- And the Sunnah is our path."

We notice once more the imitation of monumental Kufic . Since this inscription is similar to that of number 2, what was previously stated is valid in respect of this one as well .[359]

INSCRIPTION NO . 9

The longest inscription in the mosque is situated on the qibla wall above the mihrab . It was carved on a rectangular block of stone which measures eq. 89×79 cms. The whole lower part of the stone was chipped away . The simple border surrounding the inscription lacks any decoration (see fig . 216) . The inscription consists of 7 lines, which read as follows :-

رب اجعلني مقيــما لصلاة ومـن
ذريتي ربنـــا وتقبل دعاء ربنـــا
أغفر لي ولوالدي وللمؤمنيـــن
ربنا لا تزغ قلوبنا بعد إذ هديتنـا
وهب لنـا مـــن لدنـك رحمـــة

3-" Oh , my Lord! Make one who establishes regular prayer and also (rise such) .

4- Among my offspring, oh, our Lord, and accept thou my prayer, oh, our Lord !

5- Cover (us) with thy forgiveness-me, my parents and all believers.

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[359] For comparison see fig . 210 .

6- Our Lord! (they say) let not our hearts deviate now after thou hast guided us .

7- But grant us mercy from thine own Presence ."

(Qur. XIV. 40-1, iii, 8)

The ending of the last Qur anic phrase which forms the eighth line is missing as a result of the damage suffered by the lower part of the stone. This plain kufic inscription must have clearly been influenced by Naskhi forms. This influence is apparent in the following letters: Ras, Zins, Nuns and Waws, (see fig. 216). Such a phenomena seems to have been common during the second half of the 3rd/9th century. A comparative example is provided by a tombstone which is kept in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, no 8381, and which is dated 251/865.(360) When comparing the two inscriptions a great resemblance is evident in their styles. Apart from this, the inscription of the tombstone Looks more elegant with the intrusion of the foliated character, especially in the third line. Another tombstone in the same museum,no. 12607, which dates from the year 317/930.(361) could be compared with the inscription in Sharwas.In addition to a greater similarity, the strokes forming the ending of the letters (Yamalas) and Nuns, which run underneath the words to the righ-hand side, occur in both inscriptions .

INSCRIPTION NO. 10

The last inscription to be mentioned connected with this mosque is the one which was found in the tympanum of the west doorway. This semicircular stone measures eq. 83 cms. At the base and approximately 74 cms. In height (see fig 217) . The inscription consists of two lines. It reads :-

(360)Wiet, op. cit, vol. II, pl. LII.
(361) Ibid, vol. V, pl. 1.

لا إلـــــــــــه إلا الله وحـــده لا شريك لــــــه .

محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره .

(علـــى الدين كله ولو كره المشركـــــــــــون) .

1- "There is no God but God alone;

he has no associate

2- Muhammad is the apostle of God whom
He sent with guidance and the
Religion of truth that he may make it Victorious over (every other religion)."

(Adaptation of Qur. IX, verse 33)

This elegant plain kufic is again influenced by Naskhi forms. This is very apparent in the following letters: Ra, Waw, Nun and Yamala. Such a style was meant to be suitable for architecture. This inscription when compared with others in the mosque of Cordoba, as well as the inscriptions on caskets,(362) made in both Madinat al-Zahra and Cordoba, dating from the second half of the 3rd/9th century, bears a similarity and resemblance that is more than evident .

THE INSCRIPTIONS OF ABNAYAN
INSCRIPTION NO. 11

The decorations and inscriptions of this mosque are found on eight blocks of stones flanking the mihrab; four on each side. These stones are square in shape and each one measures eq. 32×32 cms. When facing the mihrab an interesting kufic inscription and decoration appears on the second stone from the top on the right-hand side. This decoration consists of four arches. In the centre there is an eight-petalled rosette. Between its petals are leaf motifs. In the next circle there are series of small circles, while the

(362) For comparison with Sharwas inscription see, John Bekwith, Caskets from Cordoba, London, 1960, pls. 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, - 18.

third circle is decorated with tiny dots (see fig 218). On the outer circle there is an inscription in foliated kufic which reads as follows:-

شهد الله أنه لا إله إلا هو والملائكــة
وأولو العلم قائما بالقسط لا إله إلا هو

"There is no God but he , that is the witness Of God, his angels and those endowed with knowledge, Standing firm on justice, no God but He."

(Qur. III, 18)

This inscription is of great importance since it is the only example of foliated kufic to be found in Jabal Nafusa. Other examples dating from the 3rd / 9th century were found in the eastern part of the country.(363)

The leaf motifs on these steles appear to be more natural and rather elegant when compared to the inscription of Abnayan .

INSCRIPTION NO . 12

Again when facing the mihrab there are four decorated stones on the left-hand side. The decoration of the second stone from the top consists of two circles. The inner circle has a cross-shaped desing which divides it into four sections. The sections which are opposite each other have the same decoration . Plant motifs in the form of palm tree leaves are predominant in this decoration (see fig.219). In the outer circle there is a plain kufic inscription which reads :-

"نعمـــة ســابغة بــركـة كـاملـة بـركـة مـن اللـه
لــمـن آمـــن بـــأمـــان اللــــه وليـــــه"

"A great gift, complete blessing. Blessing from God On those who believed in God s security, his supporter."

Although this inscription could be classified as a plain kufic, there appears the occasional intrusion of Naskhi forms. This is evident in the letters Ra, Waw, Mim and Nun. This inscription greatly resembles Inscription No.9, which was found just above the

(363) See, S. Bilhaj, Libya Antiqua, vol. V, 1968, pls, LXXXVIII, fig B ,LXXXV, fig.B.

mihrab in Sharwas (see fig.216). Therefore it is not necessary to again state what was mentioned earlier on concerning the Sharwas inscription .

THE INSCRIPTION OF TNUMAYAT 'S MOSQUE INSCRIPTION NO. 13

This kufic inscription was found in the tympanum of the doorway. It measures 90 cms. At the base and is about 60 cms. In height. (See fig. 220). On the tympanum there appear seven lines of inscription which read as follows:-

إنما يعمر مساجد الله من أمن بالله واليوم الأخر (قد) أفلح المؤمنون الذين هم في صلاتهم خاشعون وقل رب ادخلني مدخل صدق واخرجني مخرج صدق واجعل لي من لدنك وليا واجعل لي من لدنك سلطانا نصيرا بنيت في شهر الله رمضان في سنة أوربعة وخمسين وأربع مايه وبناها من أراد ثوابه في الدنيا والآخرة كتبه عبد الملك بن يعقوب النفوسي .

1- "The mosques of God shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in God and the last day .

(Qur. IX, 18)

2- The believers must (eventually) win through. Those who humble themselves in their prayers.

(Qur. XXIII, 1,2)

3- Say: "O my Lord! Let my entry be by the gate of truth and honour, and likewise my exit by the gate of truth and honor and grant me .

4- from thy presence and authority to aid (me) .

(Qur. IXII, 80).

5- It was built in the month of Ramadan in the year four hundred and fifty four.

6- It was built by he who wanted his reward in this life and in the last day 7- It was written by "Abd al-Malik bu Ya qub al-Nafusi."

This is the only dated inscription to be found in the Jabal Nafusa. It is dated 454 / 1061. The inscription of Tnumayat seems to be the most interesting however. Some of the alifs and lams have a split arrow head at their shaft. Apart from this characteristic of

foliated kufic, this inscription was much influenced by the style of the Maghribi script which was used on a large scale in manuscripts in North Africa. Hitherto no similar example was found on buildings or tombstones in Libya. This type of kufic, influenced by Maghribi script possibly appears for the first time in the 4th- 5th/10 - 11th century.

It is worthwhile mentioning that a great resemblance could be established when comparing Tnumayat inscription with a tombstone kept in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, number 1216, and dates from 322/934.[364] It is clear that the technique as well as the tool used for both inscriptions is similar. a point to emphasize here is that the Tnumayat inscription differs in adopting the Maghribi style of writing, which is noticeable in the letters fa and quf. Another tombstone in the same Museum, 3710, dating from 412/1021[365] shows the same style but lacks the Maghribi influence .

We notice in inscriptions 9,11,12 that the tops of the alifs appear to be wedge- shaped . Such a shape represents one of the variations used originally for decoration in cursive writing . It is relevant to mention that the alifs of the inscription of the Nilometer in Cairo, dated 247/861,have the same wedge-shape decoration.[366]

It appears that this decorative shape occurs less frequently on the left side of the alif than on the right. It is to be found in inscriptions as late as the 15th century A.D.[367]

As for inscriptions 2,3,4,5,6, we find a stroke at the bottom of the vertical alif extending to its left side. This kind of decoration is one of the characteristics of alifs, which was to be found in kufic in North Africa, examples of which date from the 3rd-4th/9th-10th century.[368] With the exception of no. 13, it is noticeable in all the

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(364) Wiet, op. cit, vol. V, pl. I X.

(365) Ibid, vol. . VI, pl. XXXVIII .

(366) Creswell, op. cit, vol . II, P. 293, FIG. 22. See also A. Lane, Early Islamic pottery, London 1947, .8. E. Kuhnel, op. cit, p. 9.

(367) Grohmann, A, O. vol. II PP 189 – 90 .

(368) A . Arif, op. cit, group alif , pl. 1. See also, p. and B. poinssott, op. cit, vol. II, PLS. 52 , 53.

other inscription that the greatest similarity is between the letters dal and kaf. In no. 10 each of the two letters are provided with a serpent s mouth shape . The winding tail appeared to be less complicated in Egypt during the Fatimid era . (369)

As for the letters lamalif, we find that whenever it occurs, it consists of a triangle ending in right and left hand limps (see figs.209-212,215). Again this shape seems to be characteristic of these letters in North African kufic of the late 3rd/9th century .(370)

It is very striking that the inscriptions of the Jabal Nafusa seem to fill all the space provided for them. This phenomenon appears in almost all plain Kufic.(371) If we were to compare the inscriptions of the Jabal with some other inscriptions found in other parts of Libya as well as the ones from al-Qayrawan, the first would appear less elegant.(372)This might be due to social, historical and perhaps religious factors. Nevertheless the inscriptions of Nafusa buildings show a high standard of plain kufic which looks rather elegant and beautiful .

The Jabal Nafusa is not an exception to other parts of the Islamic world as far as the use of the Kufic script is concerned . Regarding the work of restoration carried out on the buildings of the area as well as the neglect and sometimes destruction, the inscriptions found so far represent an important artistic aspect .(373) It seems that the Muslim artist in the Jabal Nafusa, as in most parts of the Islamic world, has adopted Kufic as the main element of decoration.(374) The kufic script by its nature is more suitable to the artist s requirement . Its horizontal and vertical characters with long stems in many letters enable the artist to achieve harmony between script and architecture . This, however, did not solve all the

(369) A . Arif, op. cit, pp. 41, 42. Cf. E. kuhnel, op. cit, p. 18. See also, Flury, Une formule, p. 61.

(370) A . Arif, op. cit, groups kaf and dal, pp. 17,56. See also al-Qalqashandi, op. cit, p. 101.

(371) A . Arif, op. cit, p. 62 .

(372) Libya Antiqua, vol. V, 1968, pls. LXXXIV, LXXXV. See also, S. Zbiss, al-Funun al-Islamiyya fi al-Bilad al- Tunisiyya, Tunisia, 1968, p. 50, figs. 51, 52, 55 .

(373) T Burchhart, Fine arts in Islamic Civilization, Malaysia, 1977, p. 17.

(374) T W. Arnold, painting in Islam, Oxford, 1928, p. 2.

problems, for the artist was faced with the dilemma of unfilled space when using the tall strokes like alif and lam . Accordingly, development was needed to overcome such a problem . Again the Arabic script, with its elasticity, was the appropriate answer, providing such an equilibrium between the script itself and the ornamental motifs .

As mentioned above, kufic underwent several stages of development . Nevertheless, up until the 3rd/9th century the script remain as what had become known as plain kufic . The first major step took place during the 4th/10th century. It was at that time that the Muslim artist treated the script as a decorative element more than anything else . Consequently, new forms were invented and became characteristic of this development. In spite of this, the basic principles of the script were preserved throughout all the stages of development .

The Jabal Nafusa is unlike other parts of Libya . It does not offer examples of major developments concerning kufic. The lack of excavation forces the question to remain unanswered for the time being . Historically speaking, the fall of the Rustumid dynasty had great impact on the Jabal Nafusa. Such an event created an atmosphere of isolation within which the Jabal had to live for quite a long time .

All the inscriptions, except for (fig. 220), are undated. When comparing them with inscriptions found in several places in Libya and Al-Qayrawan, it is quite safe to suggest that they date from 3rd-4th/9th-10th century. Such a suggestion corresponds a great deal with decorative and architectural evidence concerning the Mosque of Sharwas and the Mosque of Abnayan. We have previously seen how the influence of Al-Qayrawan was evident in the decoration of the Jabal Nafusa.[375] It also appears that in the field of script the Jabal did not escape such influence. Finally, it is most probable that the inscriptions found in the Jabal Nafusa preceded the fall of the Rustumids toward the end of the 3th/9th century. This may lead us

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(375) See chapter IV, P. 112 .

to suggest that some of the artist in Tahert found their way to the Jabal Nafusa, which was, at that time, the largest Ibadi stronghold. They then may have had the chance to employ their skills, including that of calligraphy. This does not necessarily mean that the artists of the Jabal did not play an important role in so far as the inscriptions are concerned .

VII
CONCLUSION

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CONCLUSION

It is clear now from what has been mentioned so far that the area of the Jabal Nafusa contains a great number of important early Islamic sites. These sites, which have been neglected, if not forgotten, for a long time, have preserved for us, in spite of the inattention, very interesting architectural features, decorations and inscriptions which emphasize the importance of the past of this region. There is no doubt that such an importance will attract scholars to more detailed studies in order to widen the knowledge in relation to the archaeological sites of the Jabal which unfortunately are now threatened by deterioration and vandalism .

The history of the Jabal has always been described as vague and lacking in detail . In spite of this, with the information we possess according to Ibadi references and other historical books and with the information provided by the fieldwork, it has been possible to form a general historical background of the Jabal, especially concerning the first five centuries of Islam. Through this we were able to piece together a chronological list of governors who ran the whole Jabal area and those who were responsible for their own smaller local areas. This new historical data of the Jabal in the first Islamic centuries provided us with a better understanding in order to study some Islamic monuments in the Jabal Nafusa. In addition to that, this data has helped considerably in the approximate dating of the monuments mentioned .

Thus now we have a clearer idea about the layout of towns in the Jabal during the early centuries of Islam. As we have seen, the mosque and the storehouse occupied the focal point of the towns, surrounded by important buildings such as the court. These in turn are surrounded by houses which are usually attached to each other creating narrow winding streets which can be seen, in part, as an adaptation to the climatic conditions. The town of Wighu,

however, is an exception. In spite of that, it has been noticed that within this town there are a great number of houses built underground which achieved the same adaptational purpose .

Although most of the towns of the Jabal Nafusa were sited on or at the foot of hills in order to avoid surprise attacks, the form of the houses, such as in the towns of Nalut and Farsatta, is also of a defensive nature where houses are joined together to form an outside wall. These two examples are older than the Ibadi towns in the south of Algeria, namely the ones in La Mzab area .

It now seems clearer that the mosques of the old towns in the Jabal Nafusa were the focal places and sources of inspiration for the Ibadi community. The mosques were not only used as places of prayer, but also as places for discussion, decision-making and education. It was in these mosques that so many learned people in the Jabal studied and taught, and some of them had the responsibility of running the affairs of the Jabal .

It is also clear that what had been taking place in the mosques received priority when compared to architectural and artistic features. In spite of this, some mosques in Jabal Nafusa still preserve architectural and decorative qualities. A point to stress here is that from studying the old mosques standing today in the old sites of the Jabal, the characteristics of the Ibadi mosques from the early centuries of Islam could be pointed out .

If this is the case with the Ibadi mosques, the town of Wighu has provided the best examples of the Ibadi type of house from the $2^{nd}/8^{th}$ century . These examples do not differ greatly from the Umayyad houses.

In spite of the small amount of decorations found in the Jabal Nafusa, it offers us adequate material to answer some questions concerning the area. It was evident from the discussion that the decorations of the Jabal are of a high standard. It is clearer now that the decorations of the Jabal had been greatly influenced by easterm Islamic areas, especially the city of Samarra. Although this influence was dominant in the decorations, local decorative motives are still evident as in the case of Al-Qayrawan in Tunisia

and Sidrata in South Algeria. These local decorative elements however indicate both Helenistic and Roman influences .

The comparative material has helped in forming an approximate chronological order for the decorations found so far in the Jabal . Such a result could be taken as criteria for future excavations. The approximate dating of the decorations contributed to more accurate dating of the mosques in which the decorations were found .

In spite of the small number of kufic inscriptions found in the Jabal Nafusa, they show a very high quality and resemble contemporary inscriptions found in different parts of the Islamic world . The inscriptions of the Jabal Nafusa, however, provide us with rare, if not unique, examples when compared to other inscriptions found in different parts of Libya. As in the case of decorations, the approximate dating of the inscriptions has thrown some light on the dating of the mosques in which these inscriptions were found .

The Hebrew inscriptions found in the city of Sharwas stand as the only archaeological evidence confirming historical information which states the existence of a Jewish community in the Jabal. In addition to that, this archaeological evidence proves that Sharwas was continually inhabited at least up until the $9^{th}/15^{th}$ century and refutes previous views held by scholars that Sharwas was destroyed and deserted in the $6^{th}/12^{th}$ century. Accordingly, the future excavations in the city of Sharwas are likely to reveal valuable information on the history of the Jabal Nafusa .

We already know that the area of the Jabal Nafusa, due to its religions and subsequent political structure, remained isolated from the areas controlled by the Umayyads, Abbasids, Aghlabids and the Fatimids.

In spite of this historical fact, the study of some monuments in the Jabal Nafusa shows that such isolation did not prevent considerable cultural interaction between the Jabal and other different Islamic areas. This was apparent by the extent of the outside influence on the Jabal Nafusa, and at the same time, by the

influence of the Jabal on the vast area which extends thousands of miles towards the south and south-west. One has to emphasize that the caravan trade as well as the propagation and spread of Ibadism played an important part in this cultural interaction.

APPENDIX

During the examination important points emerged and it was considered both by the examiners and by myself that these should be included in the thesis.

The first observation concerns the possible origin and development of the storehouses which are to be found in the Jabal Nafusa There is no doubt that these storehouses present one of the most important architectural features that are to be found aboveground in the area. Some of these storehouses were mentioned in connection with Nalut, Kabaw, Farsatta, Qasr Sidi Hamid and Sharwas.[1] Other examples are to be found in Tunisia and Morocco.[2] Although their function appear to be similar, yet slight variation could be noticed in their architectural design. This variation is apparent mainly in the positioning of the rooms (ghuraf).[3]

The storehouse at Nalut has undergone several restorations There is a distinct possibility that such repair work might have resulted in the disappearance of archaeological evidence, which could have helped us to date this building more accurately. Historical accounts testify to its existence during the 16th century.[4] Another not dissimilar storehouse, discovered in Tunisia near Tatahouine, has been dated to as early as A.D.1178.[5]

Other storehouses in the Jabal ,particularly those at Farsatta and sharwas, appear to be part of the original lay-out of these two towns.[6] such suggestions lead us to believe that the solution to this problem should be sought in the social, ethnic and political life in the Jabal during the early Islamic era.

(1) See above pp.58-60,82-3,69-70 and 118-9.

(2) H.T. Norris, "Cave habitations and granaries in Tripoli tania and Tunisia", Man, June, 1953,p.84.

(3) Ibid, p.84.

(4) See above p.61.

(5) Norris, ibid, p.84.

(6) See above pp. 82, 119.

Furthermore, such a structure, it seems, must have a Berber origin. Its whole conception seems alien to traditional "Arab" custom as introduced into North Africa.(7)Nevertheless at this stage it is futile to speculate on its origins without archaeological evidence.

Mentioning the storehouses in this thesis has come as a result of forming a general idea about the typical lay-out of an Ibadi town in the Nafusa area.(8) In any future publication ground-plans and elevations of these buildings are essential and will be produced.

As for the decorations, which were found in different parts of the Jabal, they were discussed in relation to similar architectural decoration found in Samarra, al-Qayrawan and Sidrata.(9)
Apart from this, one ought to point out that some decorative elements found in the Jabal recall metalwork, jewellery, wooden objects and early Islamic pottery, particularly of Iraqi origin .

In the mosque of Tindimmira a decorative unit was found on the qibla wall.(10) It consists of four concentric circles. The centre was filled with floral decoration. The outer two circles have no decoration , but the bordering circle is decorated with hatches . This decoration is almost identical to a lead-glazed relief ware of the 8th or 9th century excavated at Tarsus .(11)

Moreover, the six-pointed star within a circle which was found flanking the mihrab in the mosque of Abnayan, resembles to a considerable degree to the decoration of a wooden panel, housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.(12)

The same decoration appears on one of the wooden panels which form the minbar of the Great Mosque of Qayrawan. This

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(7) H.Norris, ibi , pp. 84-5.
(8) see pp. 78.
(9) See pp. 105-112.
(10) See above pp. 103-4, also fig. 103.
(11) Florence E. Day, "The Islamic finds at Tarsus" , Asia, 1941, pp. 134-6, fig.3.
(12) See Zaki Muhammad Hasan, Atlas al – Funun ...al – Islamiyya, Cairo, 1956, p.434, fig. 276.

minbar of the 8th or 9th century is believed to have bean made in Iraq.(13)

Accordingly, the influence of Iraq seems to have been strong in the Jabal . That influence, however, was not limited only to the arts. It was also considerable in religion and in the field of commerce, as it is attested by ya'qubi, who in his kitab al-Buldan, in connection with Zawila mentioned that: "Beyond waddan to the south is the town (balad) of Zawila. Its people are Muslims, all of them Ibadiyya, and go on pilgrimage toMecca. The majority of them are RWAYH ...The skins known as al-zawiliyya come from Zawila. It is a land of date- palms, where sorghum (dhura) and other (grains) are sown . Various people live there from khurasan, al-Basra and al-kufa. On the role of the Ibadis in North Africa and in the trans- Saharan trade see Lewicki's writings. The people from khurasan, Basra and kufa were, in all probability, Ibadi traders from the east, who sought refuge among the Ibadi communities of the Maghrib. There were people from Basra and kufa in other Ibadi centres, e.g. Sijilmasa)(14)

This Literary evidence provides us further support for the date we have suggested for the mosques in the Nafusa, particularly for those which have elaborate decorations.

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(13) thid , p.435.fig.282.

(14) cf. Corpus of early Arabic sources for West African history, translated by J.F.P. Hopkins, edited_and annotated by N. Levtzion and J.F.P Baghdadi. Hopkins, Cambridge, 1980, pp. 22 and 378.

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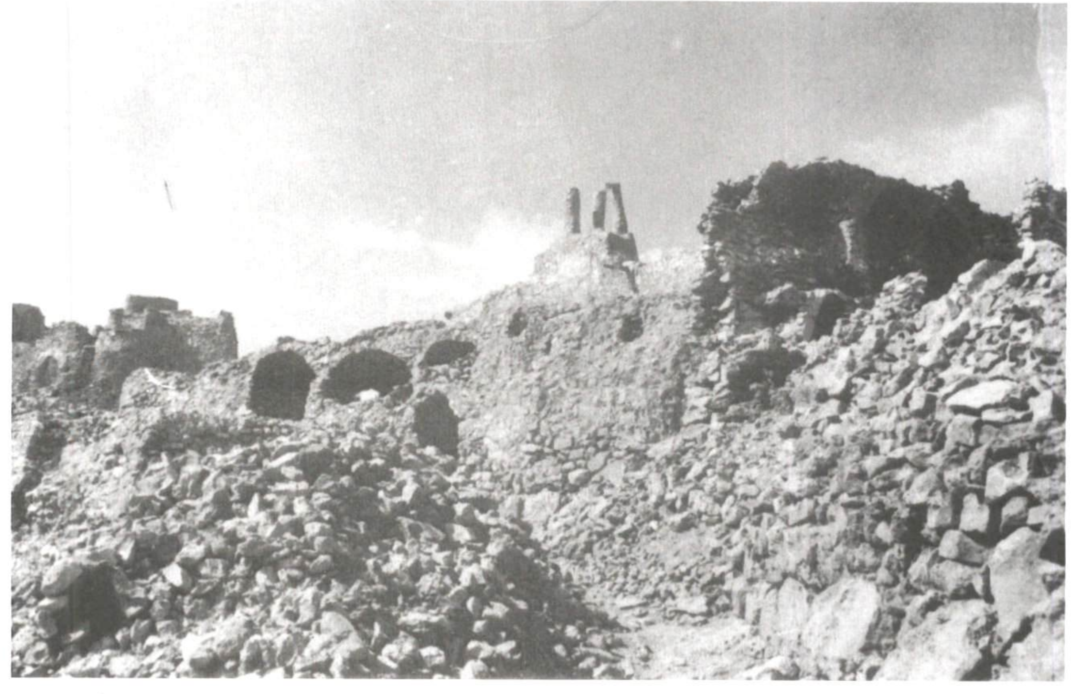


LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

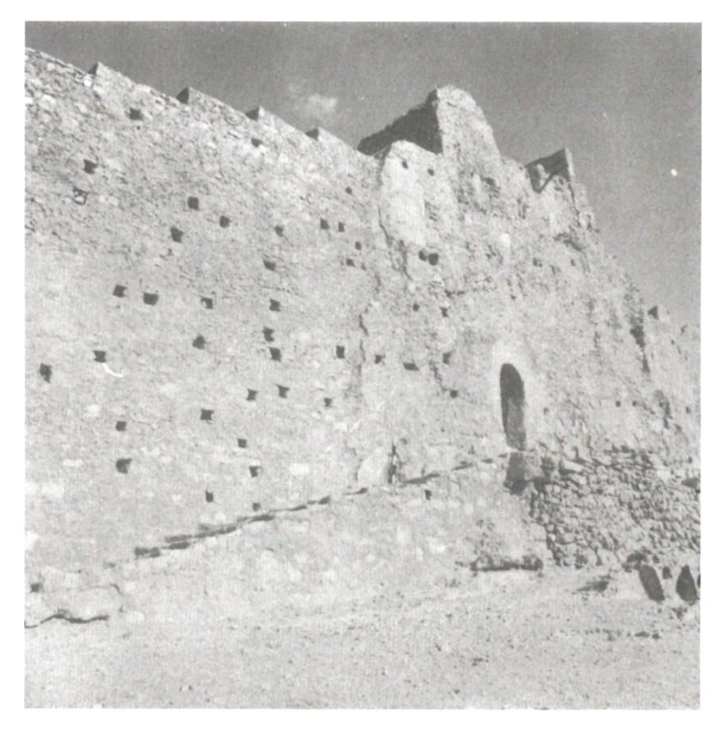
(*Fig. 1*) A general view of the town of Nalut as it looks from the east side

(*Fig. 2*) The western side of storehouse of Nalut with some remains of old houses.

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(Fig. 5) The eastern side of the storehouse where the main entrance could be seen.



(Fig. 6) Part of the north side with in the storehouse.

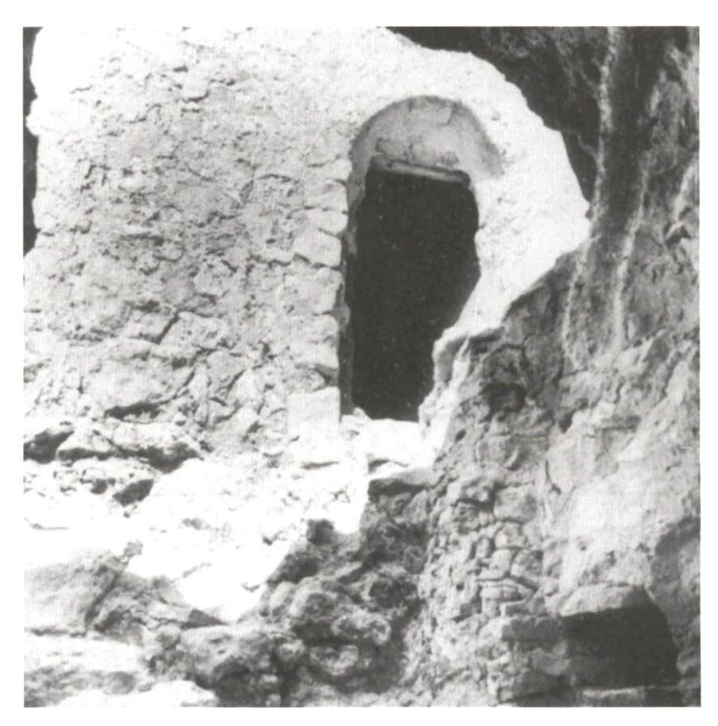


(Fig. 7) The western side of the interior of storehouse of Nalut.



(Fig. 8) Part of the corridor which runs around the inner building of the storehouse.

(Fig. 9) The upper mosque of Nalut overlooking to the north east some of the old houses of Nalut.

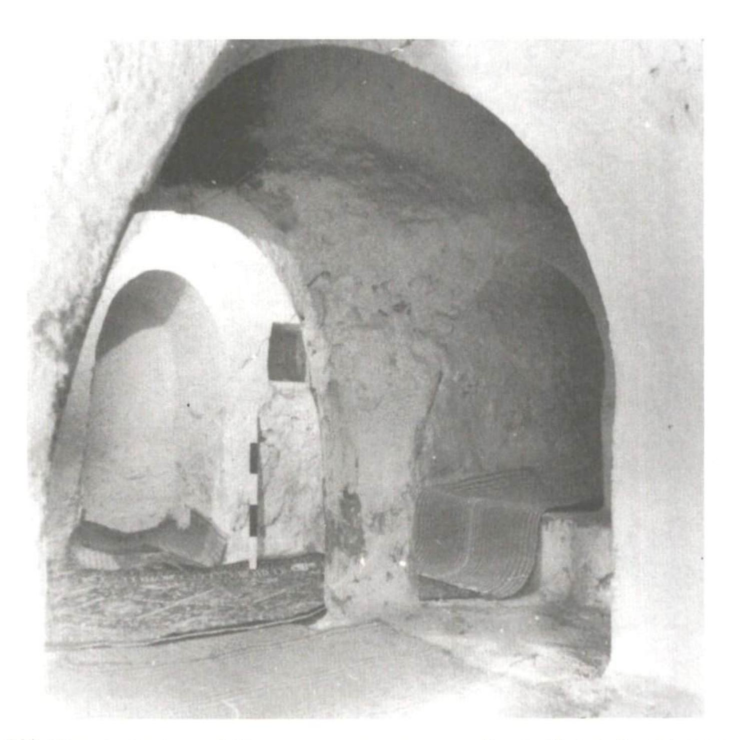


(Fig. 10) The entrance of the upper mosque which lies north east wall.

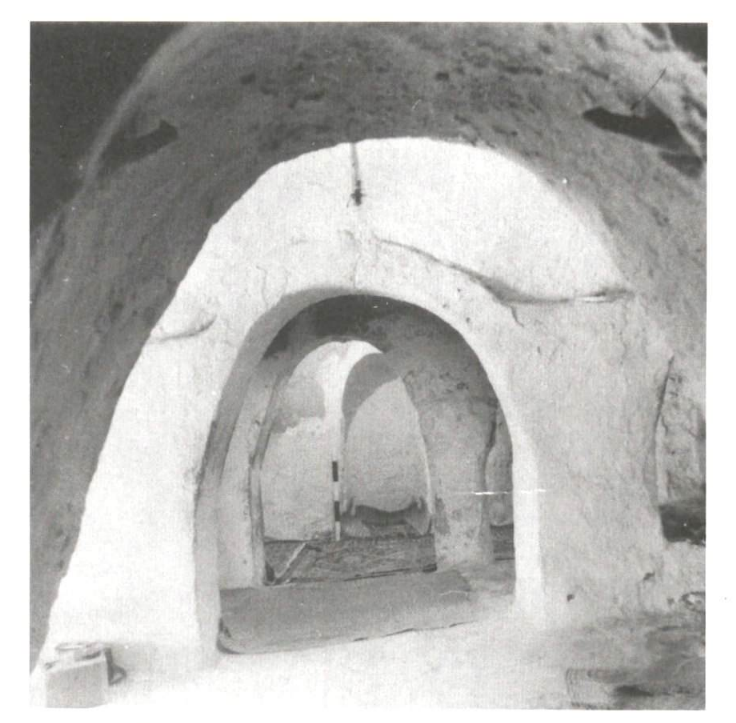
THE UPPER MOSQUE - NALUT

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(*Fig. 11*) The ground plan of the upper mosque.

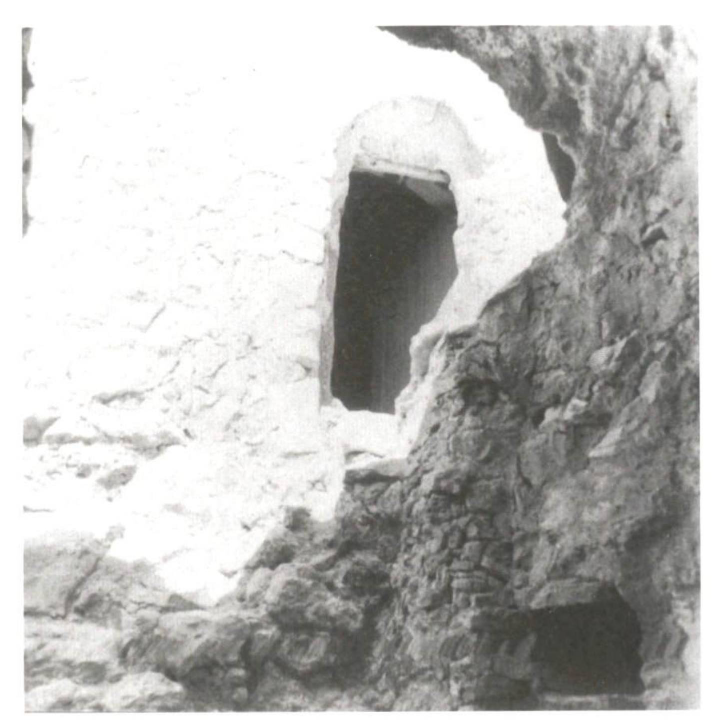


(*Fig. 12*) The interior of the upper mosque where the mihrab could be seen in the south east side.



(Fig. 13) The interior of the upper mosque as it looks from the north east side

(Fig. 14) An opening in the north west wall which used to lead to the roof of the mosque.



(Fig. 15) Part of the whitewashed façade of upper mosque with its plain entrance in the North West wall.

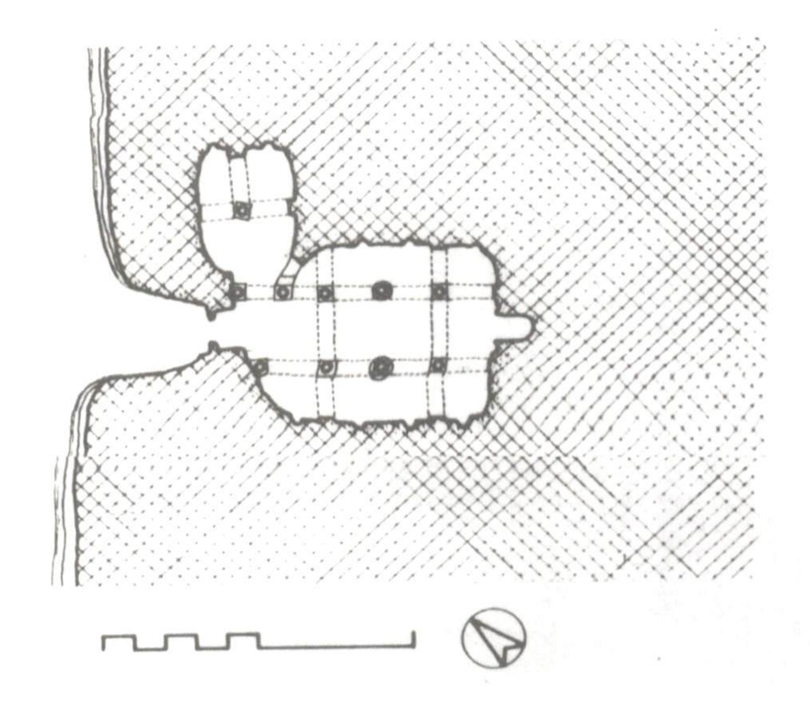


(Fig. 16) The old town of Kabaw with its storehouse dominating the view.

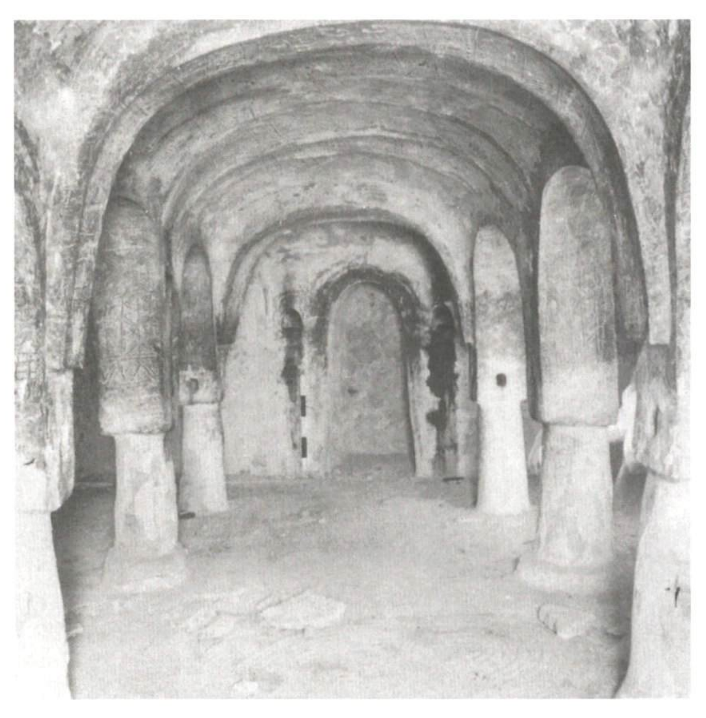
(*Fig. 17*) The eastern wall of the old town of Kabaw.



(*Fig. 18*) The ruins of the old town of Tnumayat.



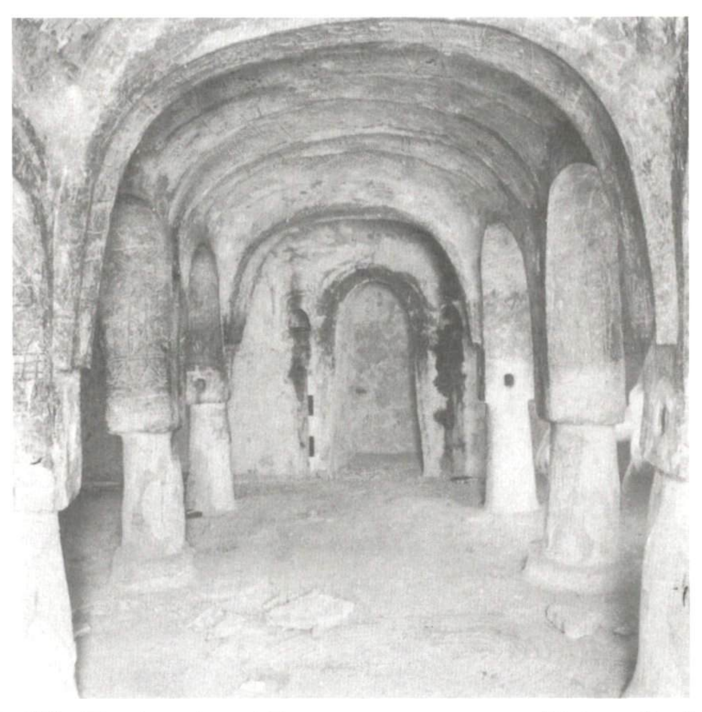
(Fig. 19) The ground plan of Tnumayat is mosque.



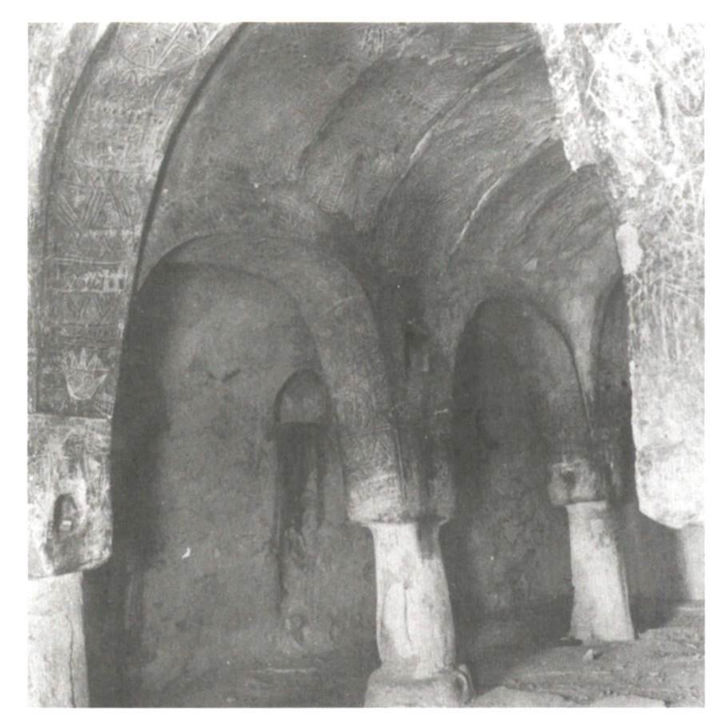
(Fig. 20) The interior plan of the mosque of Tnumayat.



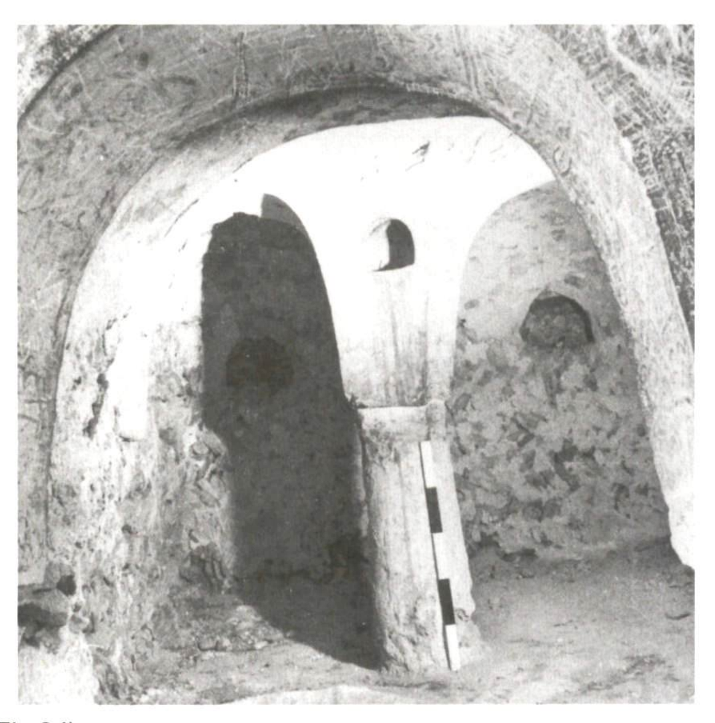
(Fig.21) Decorations on the ceiling of Tnumayat's mosque.



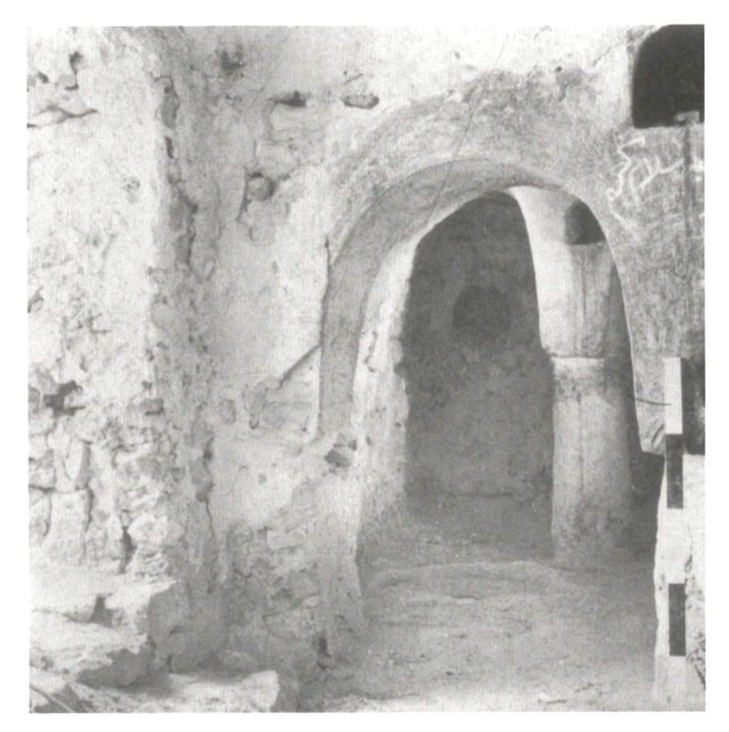
(Fig.22) The interior of Tnumayat's mosque with its mihrab in the south east wall.



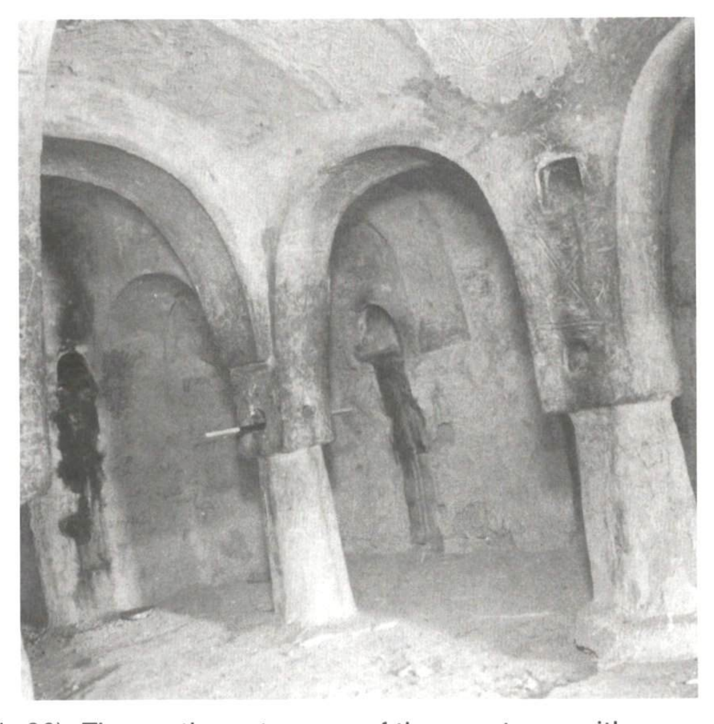
(Fig.23) Interior of the mosque of Tnumayat, north east side.



(Fig.24) The small room situated at the north east corner of the sanctuary.



(Fig.25) The entrance of the small room of Tnumayat mosque.



(Fig.26) The south west corner of the sanctuary with recesses used for oil lamps.



(*Fig.27*) Some of the decorations on the ceiling of Tnumayat.

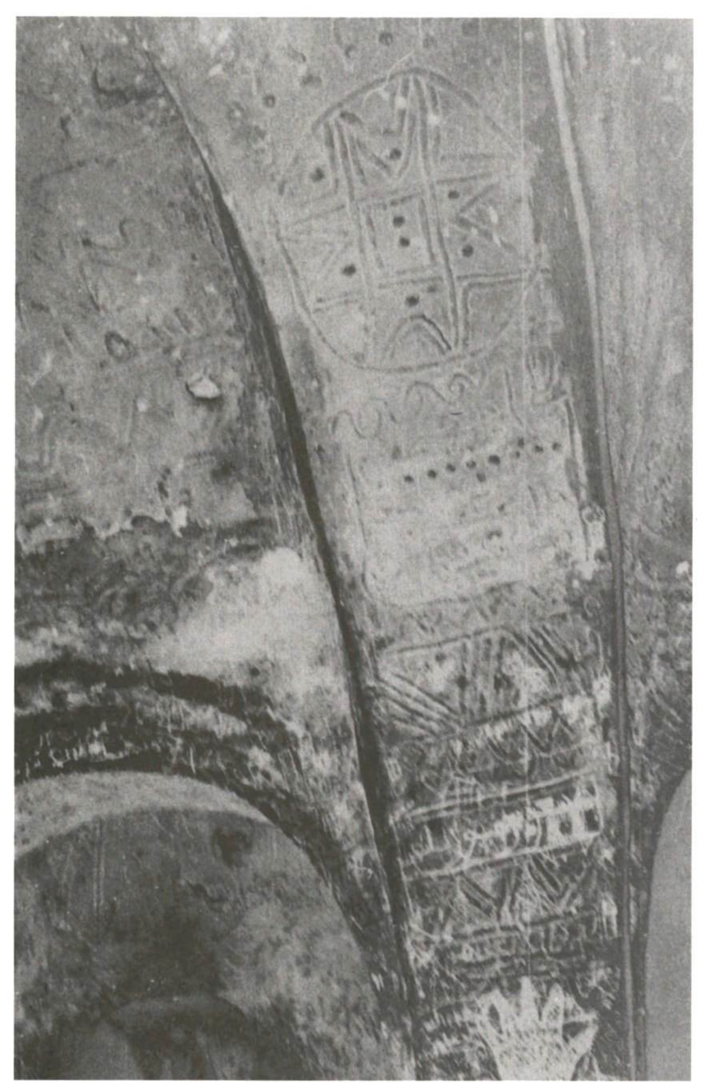


(*Fig.28*) Some of the decorations on the ceiling of Tnumayat.

(Fig.29) Some of the decorations on the ceiling of Tnumayat.



(Fig.30) Some of the decorations on the ceiling of Tnumayat.



(Fig.31) Some of the decorations on the ceiling of Tnumayat.

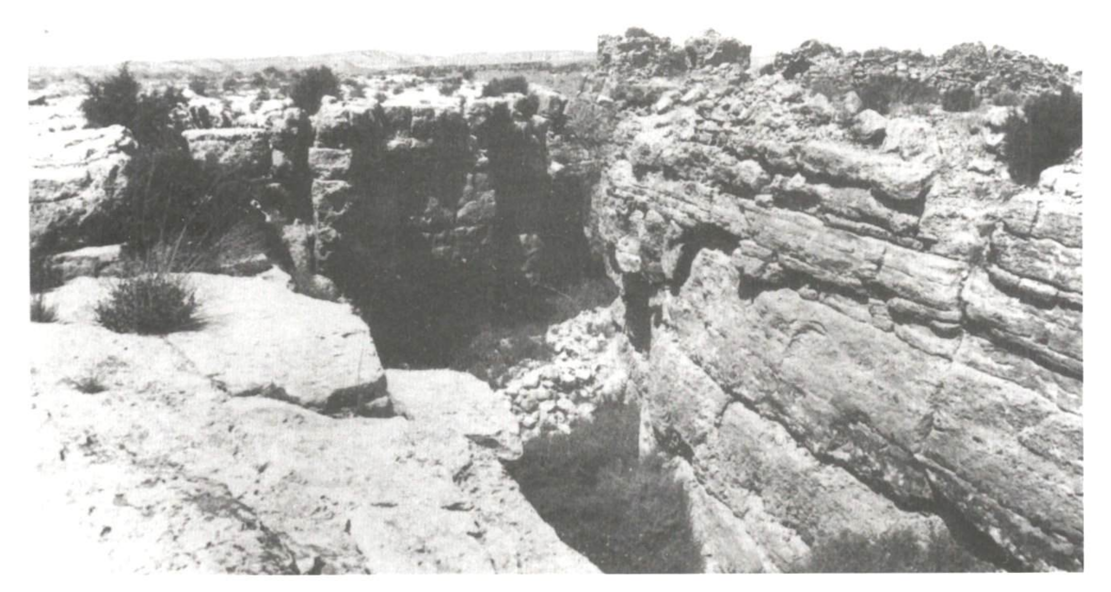


(Fig.32) The interior of Tnumayat's mosque showing the south west side.

(Fig.33) Decorations of Tnumayat'S mosque.

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(Fig.35) The ruins of qasr Sldi Hmld.



(Fig.36) **Part of the ditch surrounding the storehouse of Qasr SldT Hmld.**

(Fig.37) **Part of the ditch surrounding the storehouse of Qasr SldT Hmld.**

(Fig.38) The courtyard of the storehouse of qasr Sidi Hmld.

(Fig.39) One of the rooms of the storehouse.

(*Fig.40*) The mosque of Abnayan standing amongst the ruing of the old site.

(*Fig.41*) The western side of Abnayan1 s mosque with the women's entrance in the south west wallo.



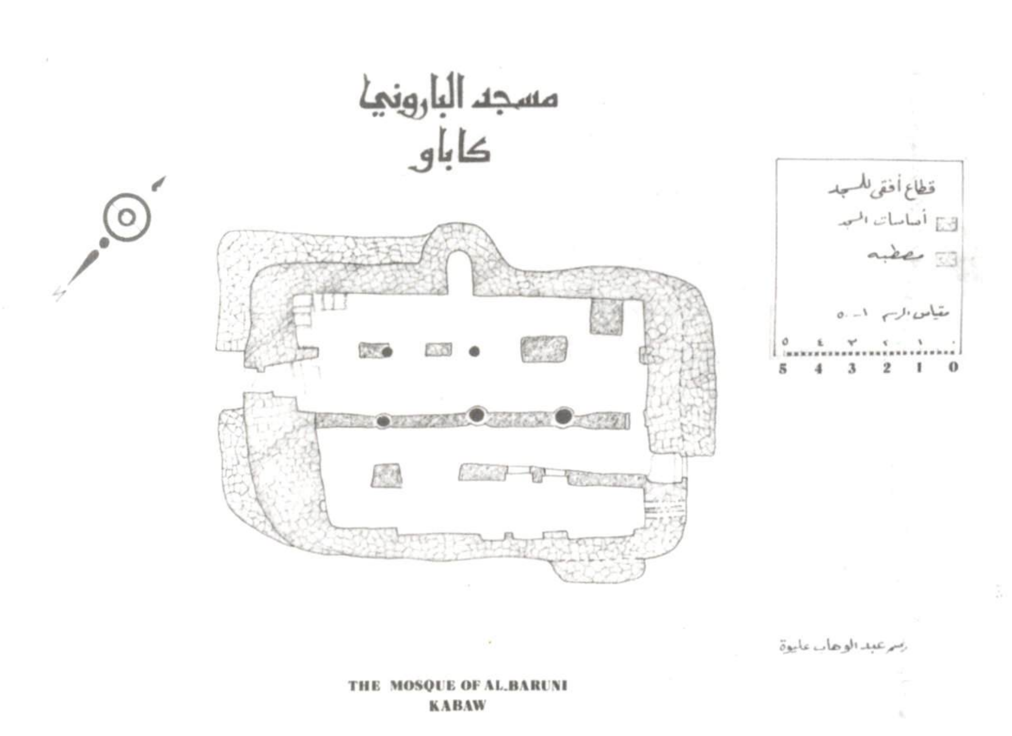
(Fig.42) General view of Abnayan as it appears from the town of Kabaw which lies to the east.

(Fig.43) Part of the foundation of the wall which could have surrounded Abnayan.

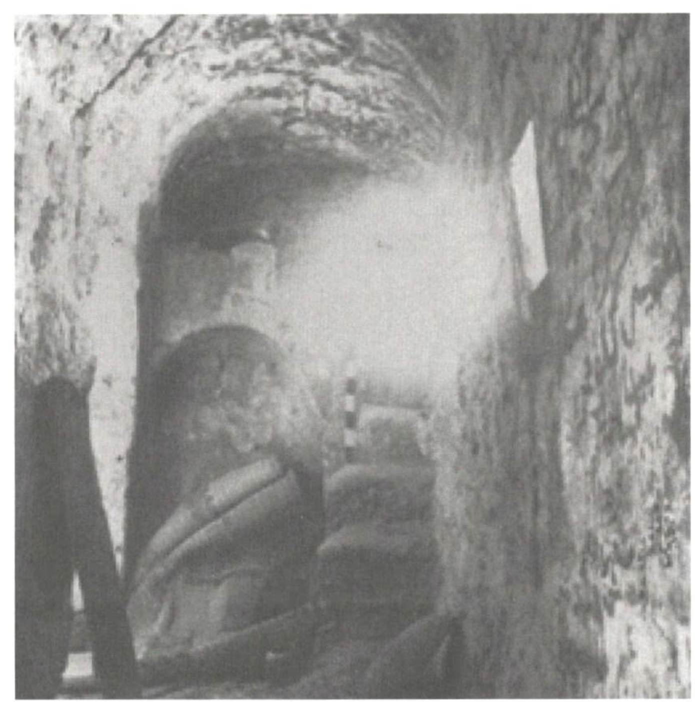


(Fig.44) The mosque of Abnayan as it looks from the north east side.

(Fig.45) The women's entrance with two small windows at the southwest corner of the mosque.



(Fig.46) The ground plan of Abnayan1a mosque.


(Fig.47) A staircase at the north east corner of the mosque.



(Fig.48) The mihrab of Tmimayat's mosque flanked on each side by decorations.



(*Fig.49*) Decorations flanking the mihrab in Abnayan mosque.



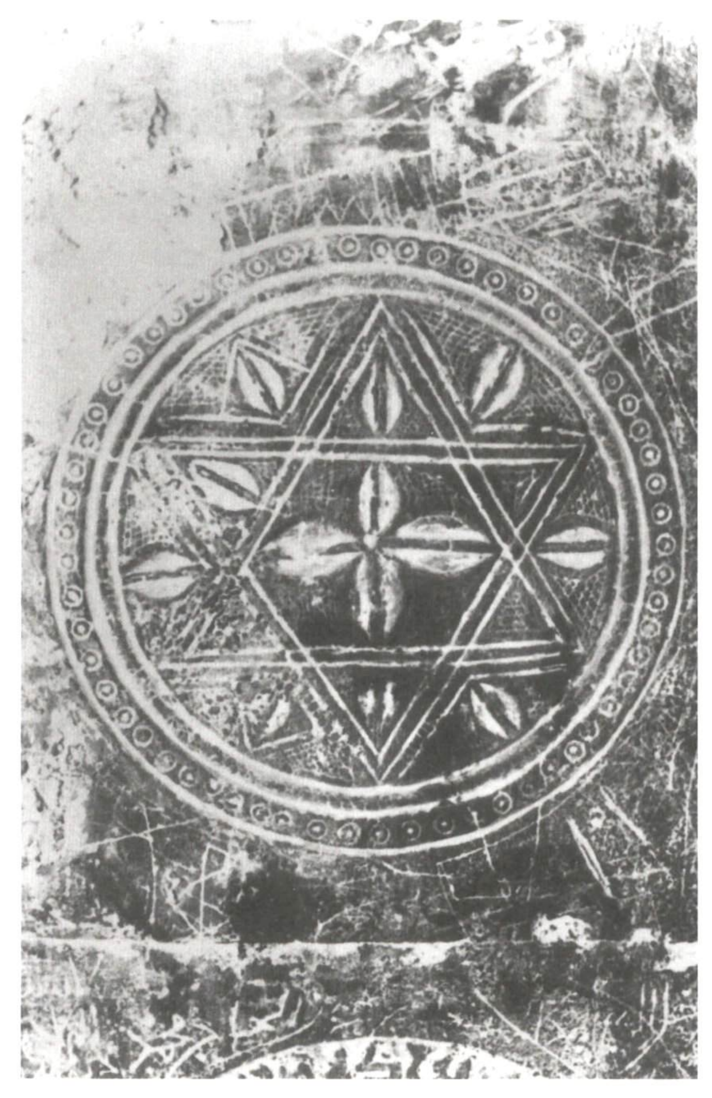
(*Fig.50*) Decorations and an inscription flanking the mihrab in Abnayan mosque.



(Fig.51) Decorations and an inscription flanking the mihrab in Abnayan mosque.



(Fig.52) **Decorations flanking the mihrab in Abnayan mosque.**



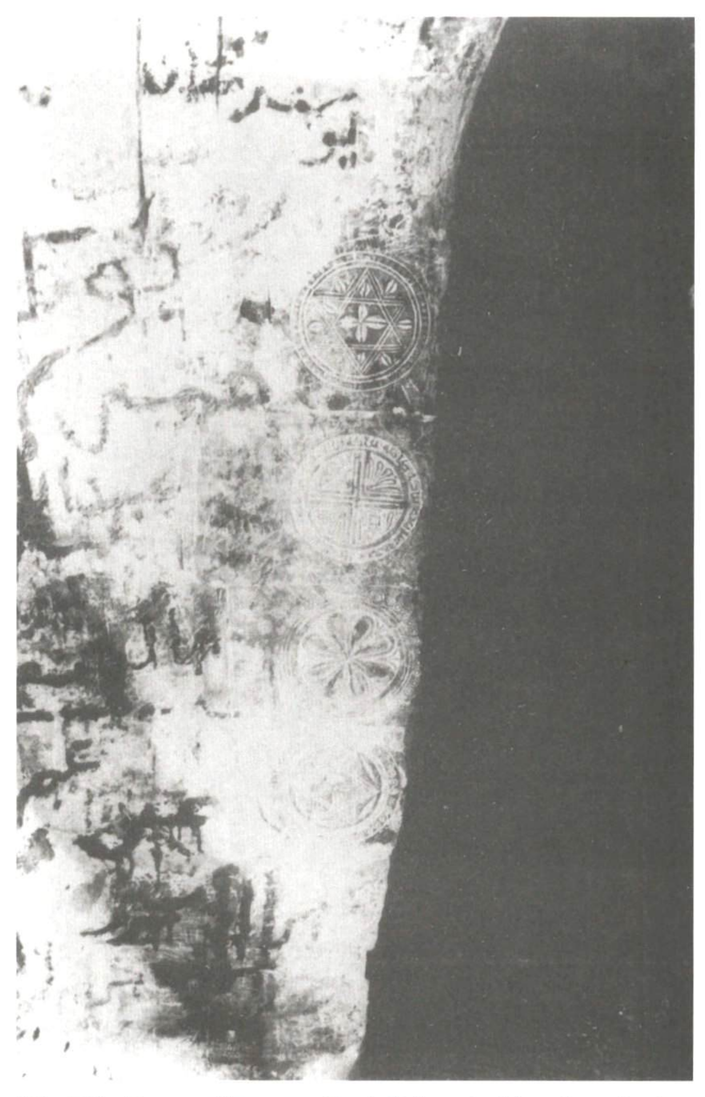
(Fig.53) Decorations flanking the mihrab in Abnayan mosque.



(*Fig.54*) Decorations and an inscription flanking the mihrab of Abnayan mosque.



(Fig.55) Decorations flanking the mihrab in Abnayan mosque.



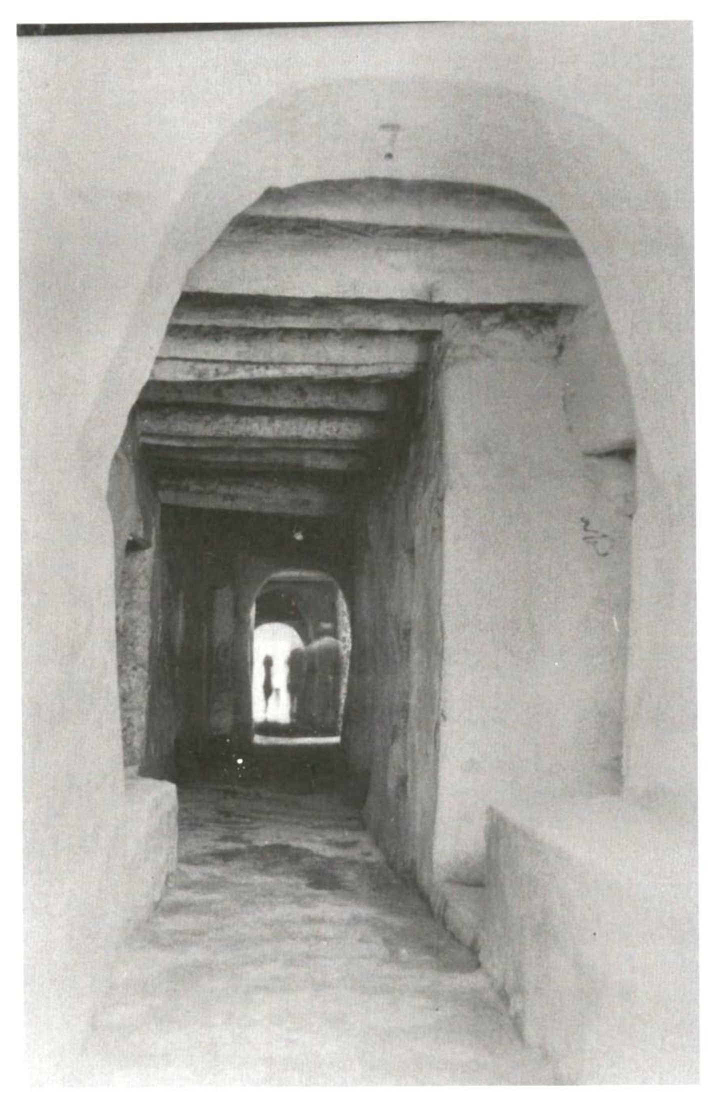
(Fig.56) Decorations on the left hand side when facing the mihrab.

(Fig.57) The old town of Farsatta as it looks from the south west.

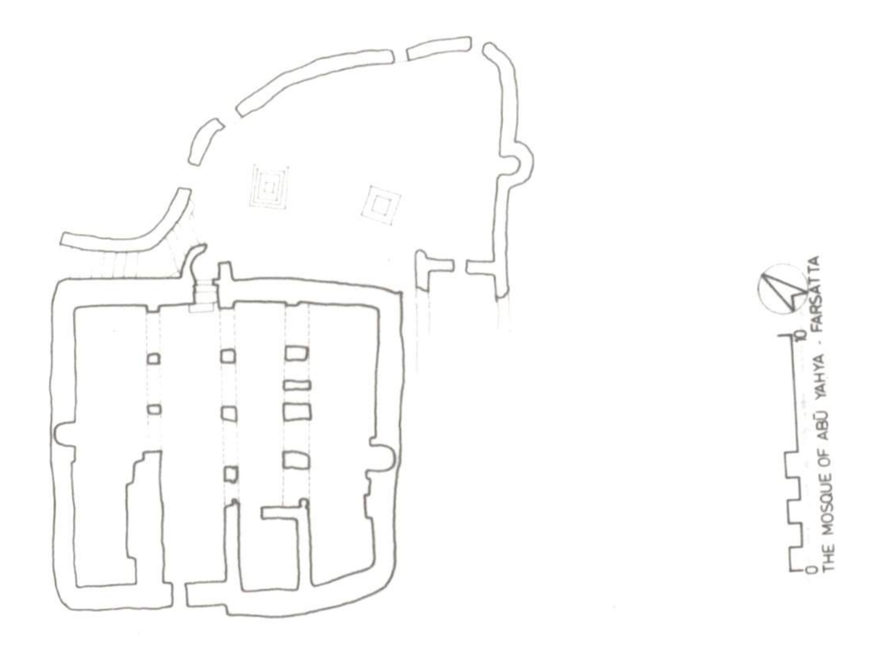
(Fig.58) The old town of Farsatta with its storehouse at centre.



(Fig.59) The old deserted town of Farsatta where the houses are attached to each other. The shot was taken from the south side.



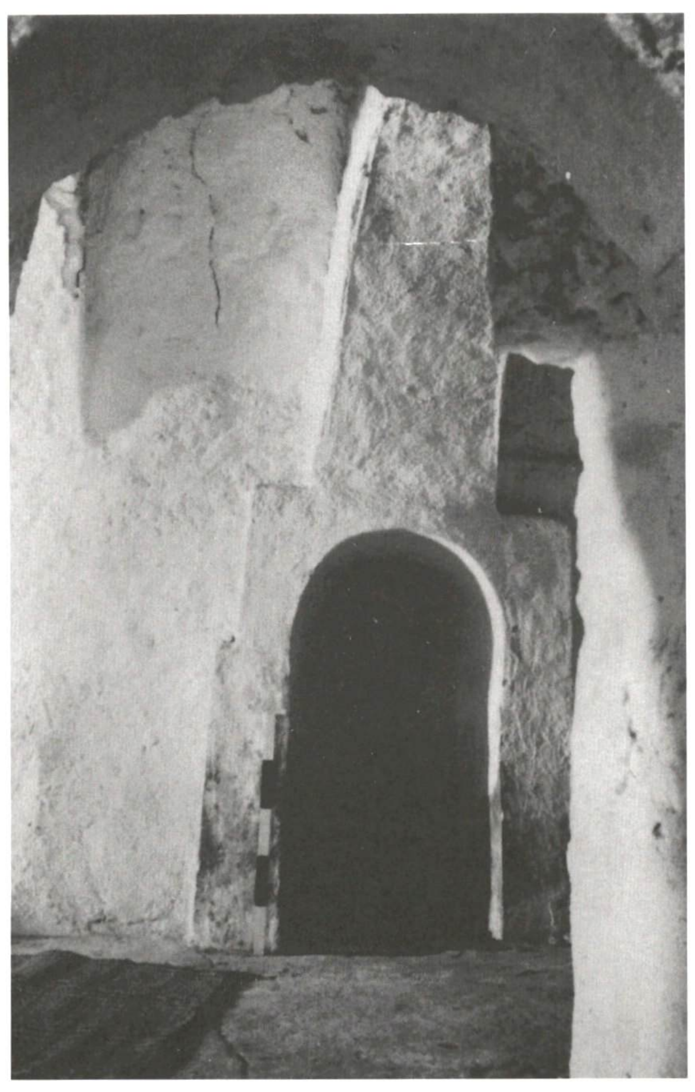
(Fig.60) **A street in the city of Ghadamis.**



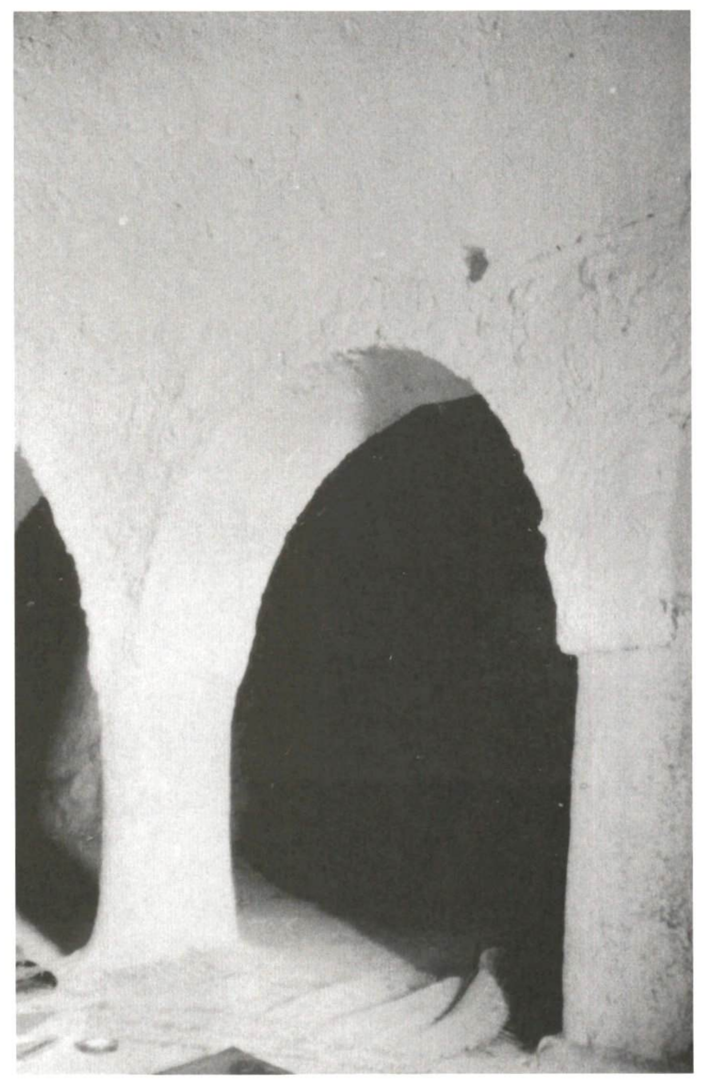
(Fig.61) The ground plan of the mosque of Abu Yahya in Farsatta.



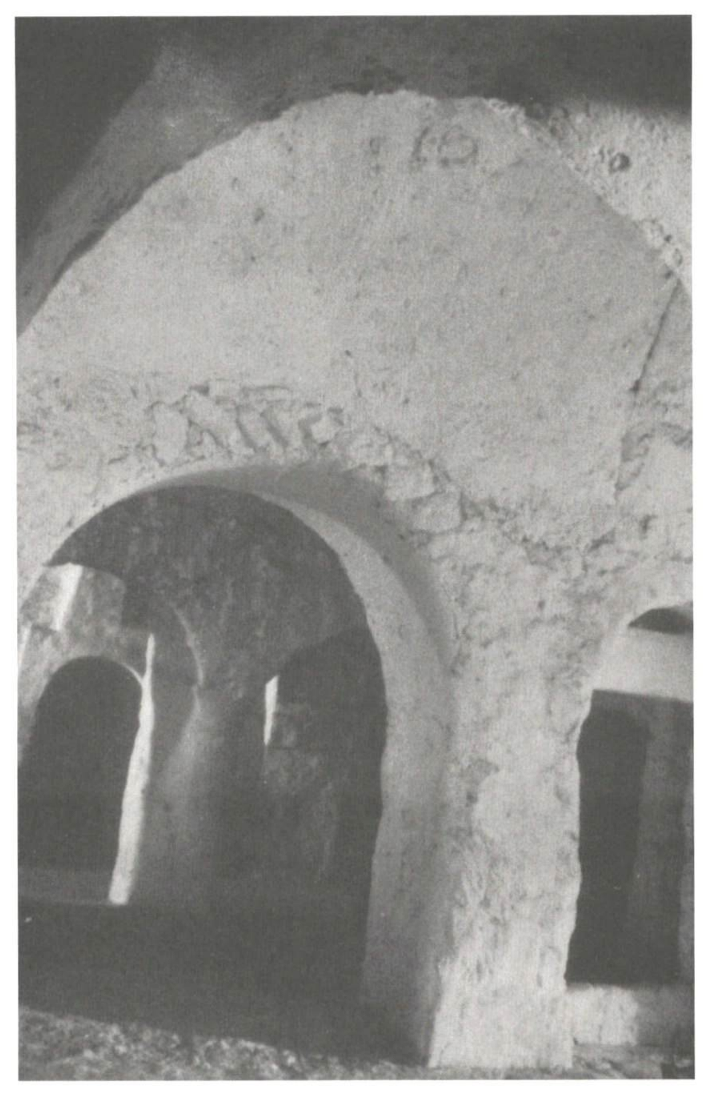
(Fig.62) The courtyard of the mosque of Abu Yahya with its mihrab.



(Fig.63) The mihrab in the mosque of Abu Yahya in Farasatta.



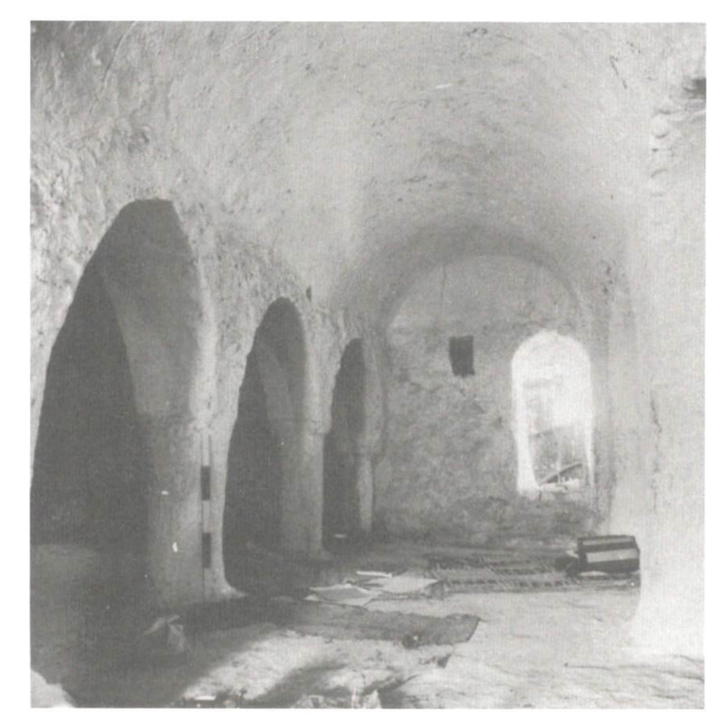
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(Fig.65) The interior of Abu Yahya's mosque and to the right handside the small room which was used to keep manuscripts.

(Fig.67) The mosque of Abu Yahya with its south west entrance.

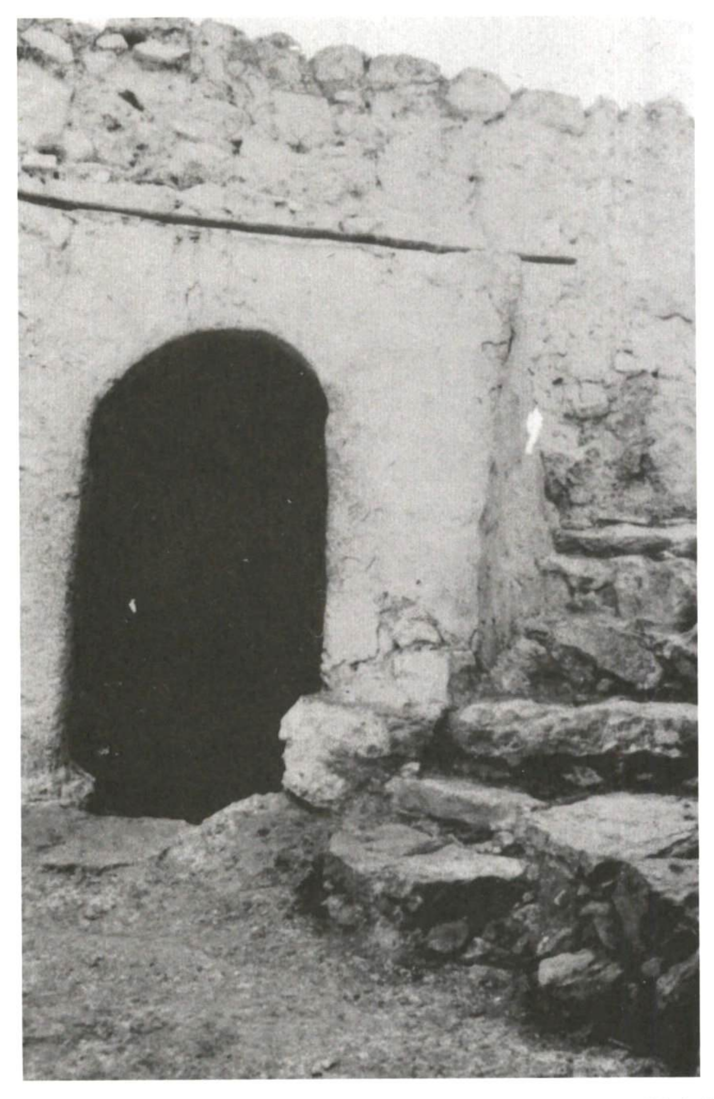
(Fig.68) The courtyard of the mosque of Abu Yahya.



(*Fig.69*) The interior of the mosque of Abu Yahya looking at the south west wall.



(*Fig.70*) The courtyard of Abu Yahya's mosque where appears a room to the right hand side used by the visitors.

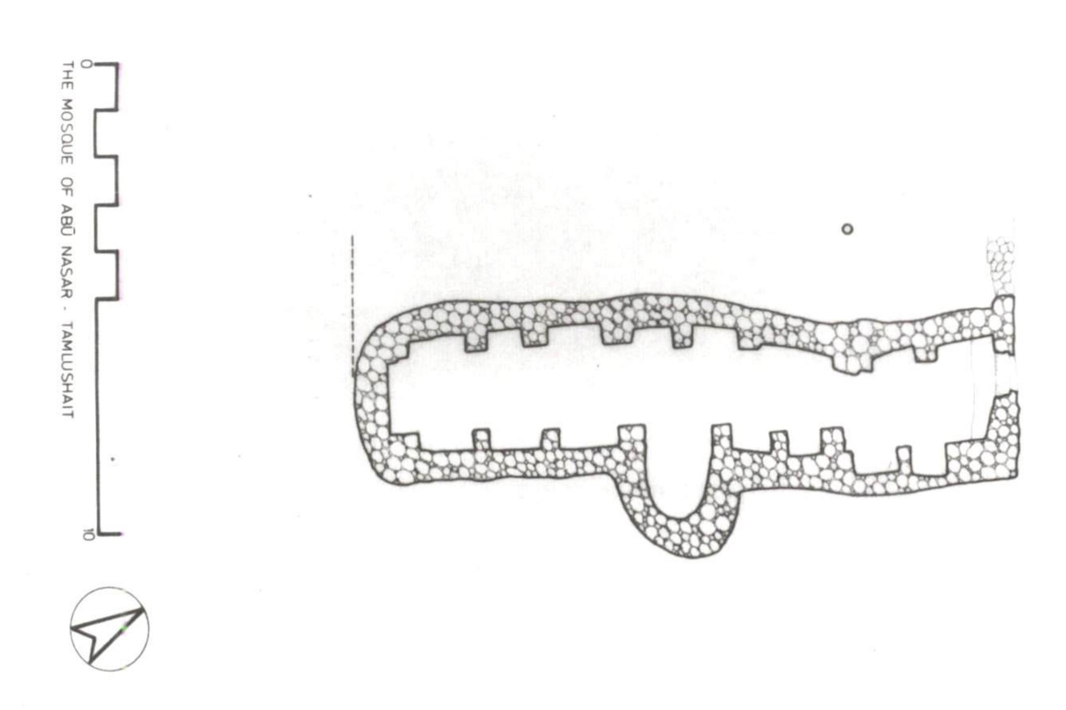


(Fig.71) The main entrance of Abu Yahya's mosque which lies in the north east wall.

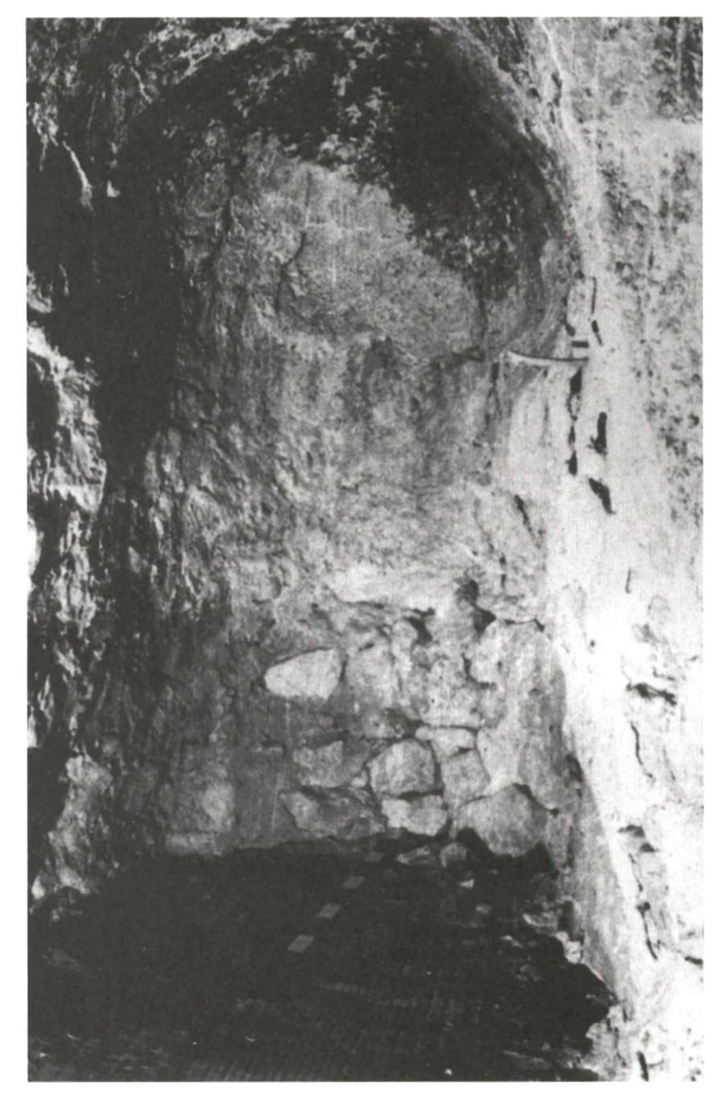


(Fig.72) A kiln of making pottery which lies a few metres to the east of Abu Yahya.

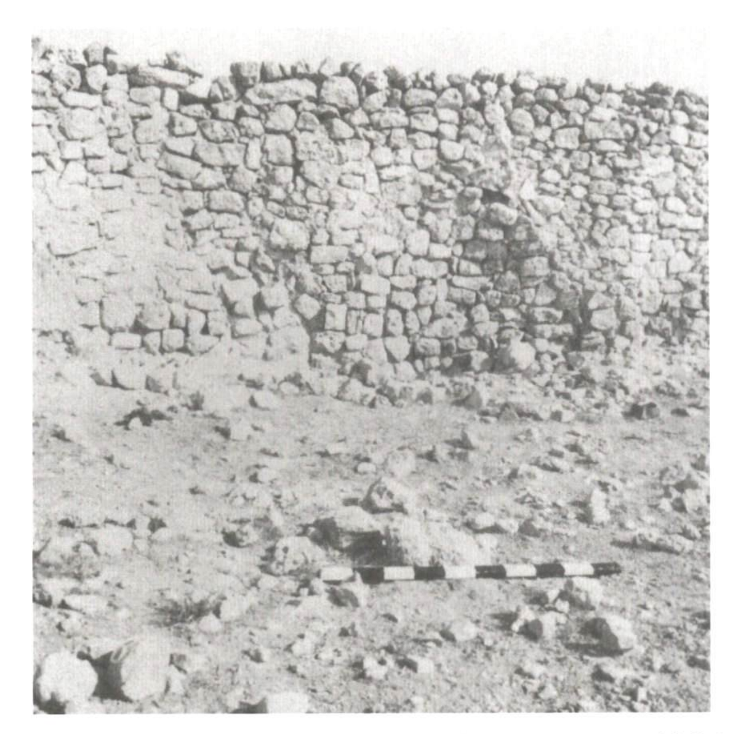
(Fig.73) The mosque of Abu Nasr in Tamlushayat with its mihrab projecting from the wall towards the south east.



(Fig.74) **The ground plan of Abu Nasr's mosque in Tamlushayat.**

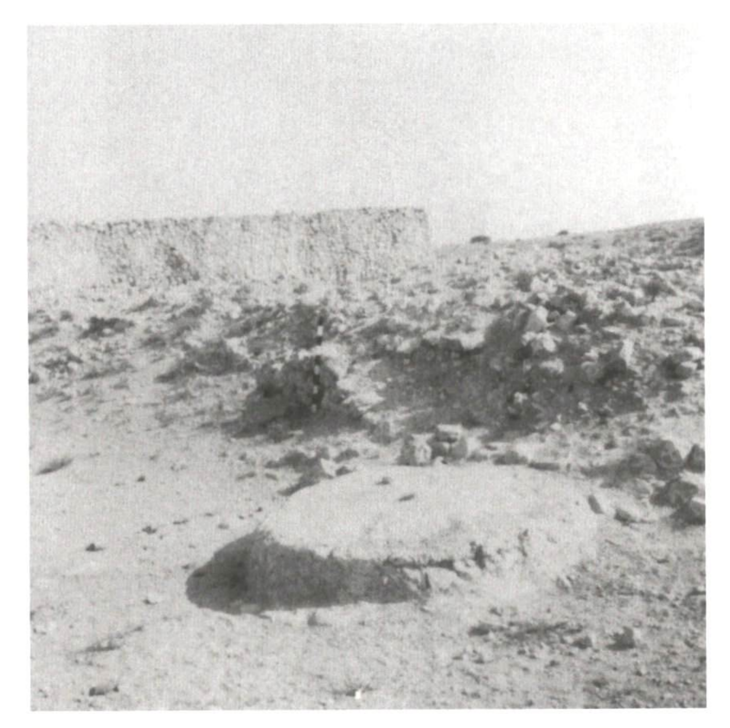


(Fig.74 A) The mihrab of Abu Nasr's mosque.



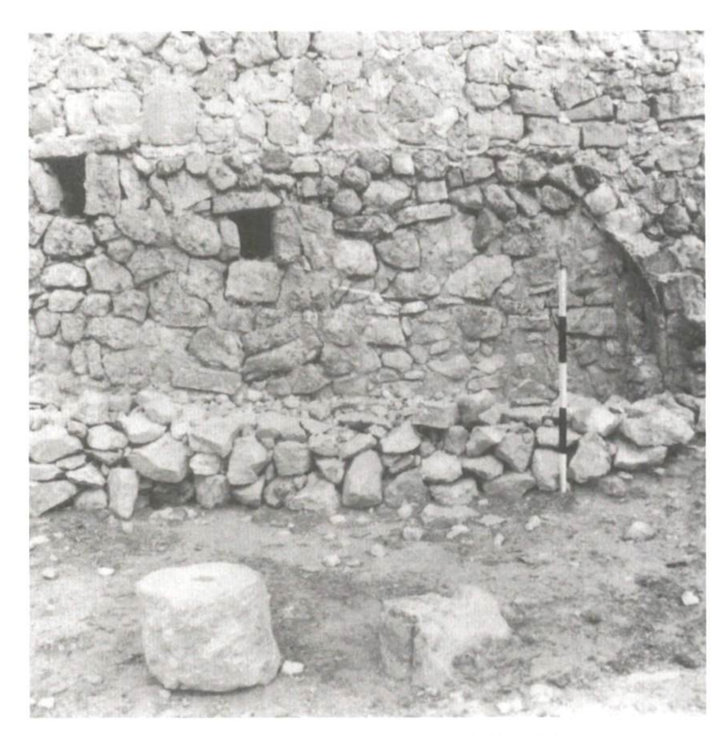
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(Fig.76) The mosque of Abu Nasr as it looks from the north east.



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(Fig.78) The mosque of Abu Mansur in Tindimmira as it appears from the north east.



(Fig.79) **Part of the north western wall of Abu Mansur's mosque**

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MOSQUE OF ABU MANSUR

(Fig.80) **The ground plan of the mosque of Abu Mansur 's mosque.**



(Fig.81) The main entrance of Abu Mansur's mosque which lies in the north east wall.

(Fig.82) The north west wall in which the second entrance of Abu Mansur's mosque could be seen.

(Fig.83) The south east wall of the mosque of Abu Mansur where the restoration work is evident.



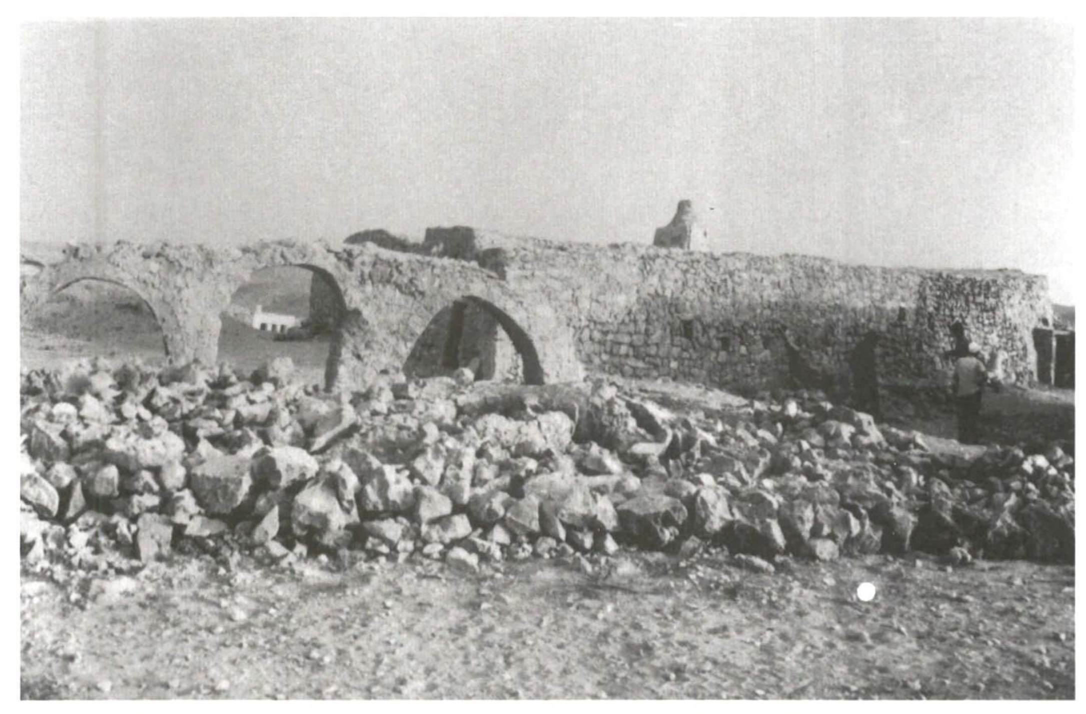
(Fig.84) The sum' a of the mosque of Abu Mansur.



(Fig.85) The sum' a of the mosque of Abu Mansur.



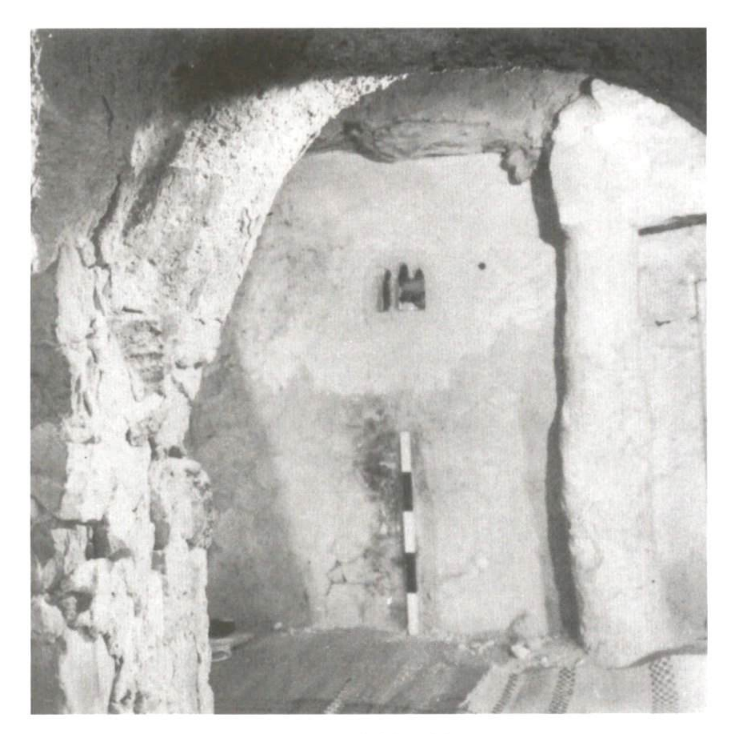
(Fig.86) The sum' a of the mosque of Abu Mansur.



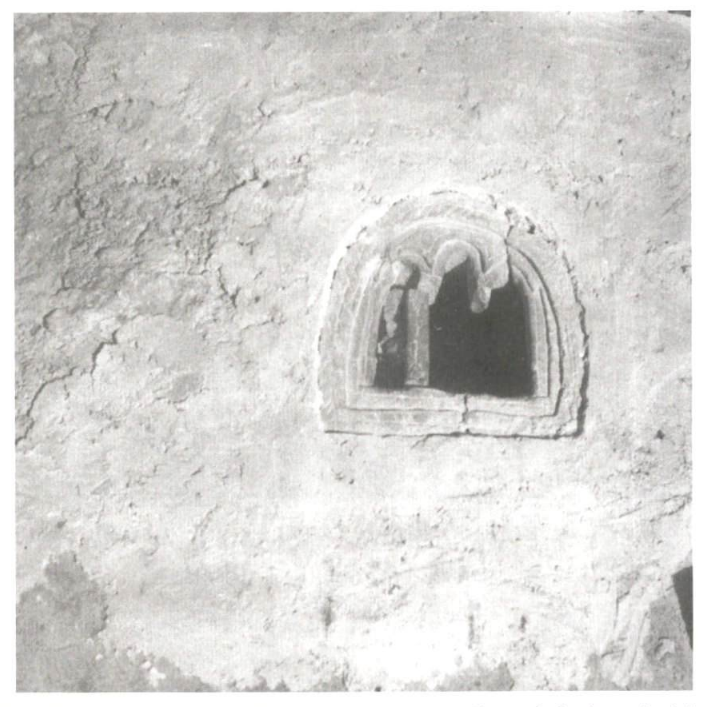
(Fig.87) The remains of the visitors' rooms which lie to the north east of the mosque.



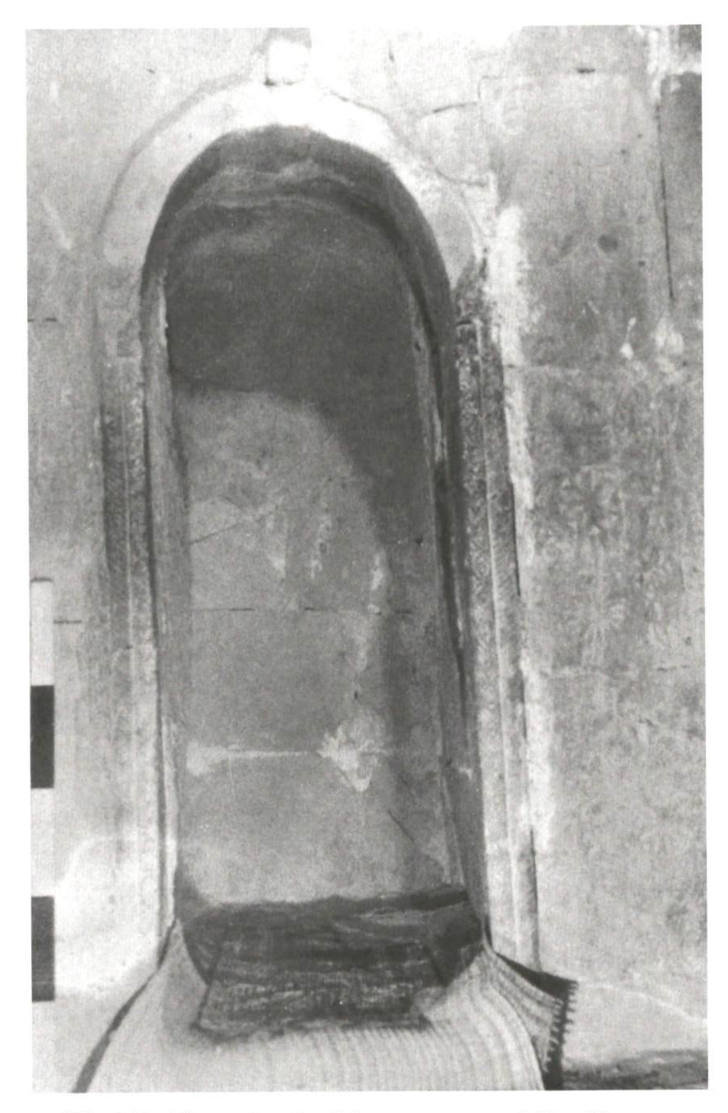
(Fig.88) **An inscription situated to-the right hand side when facing the mihrab .**



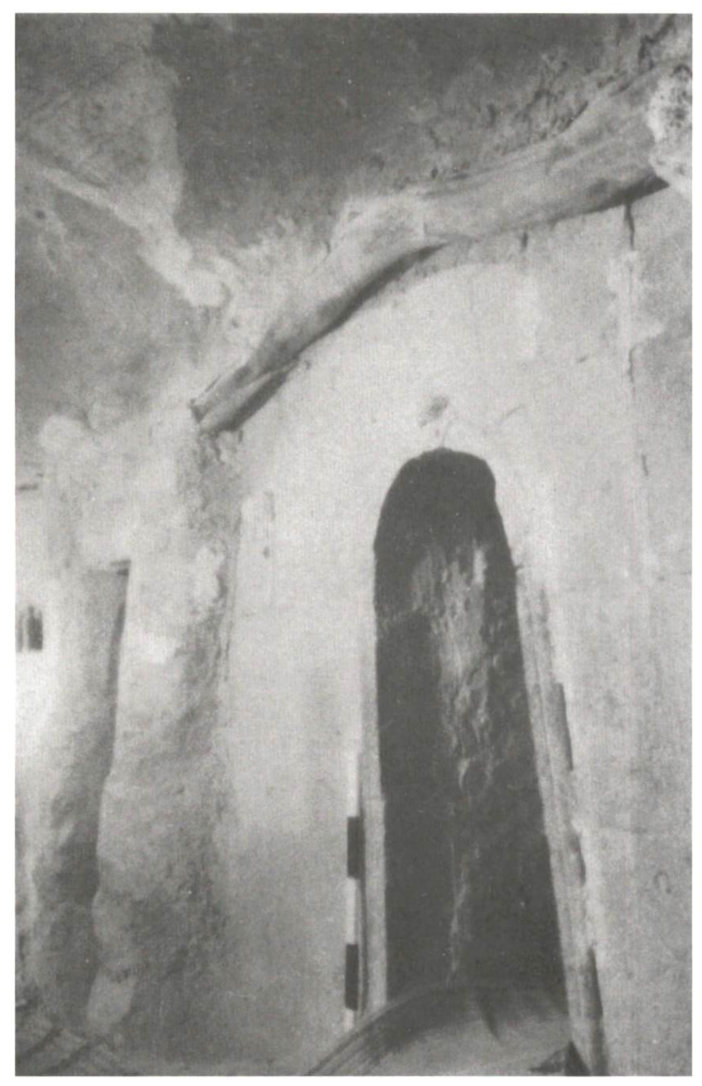
(Fig.89) The interior of Abu Mansur's mosque.



(Fig.90) A recess in the south east wall to right hand side when facing the mihrab.



(Fig.91) The mihrab of the mosque of Abu Mansur



(Fig.92) The mihrab of the mosque of Abu Mansur



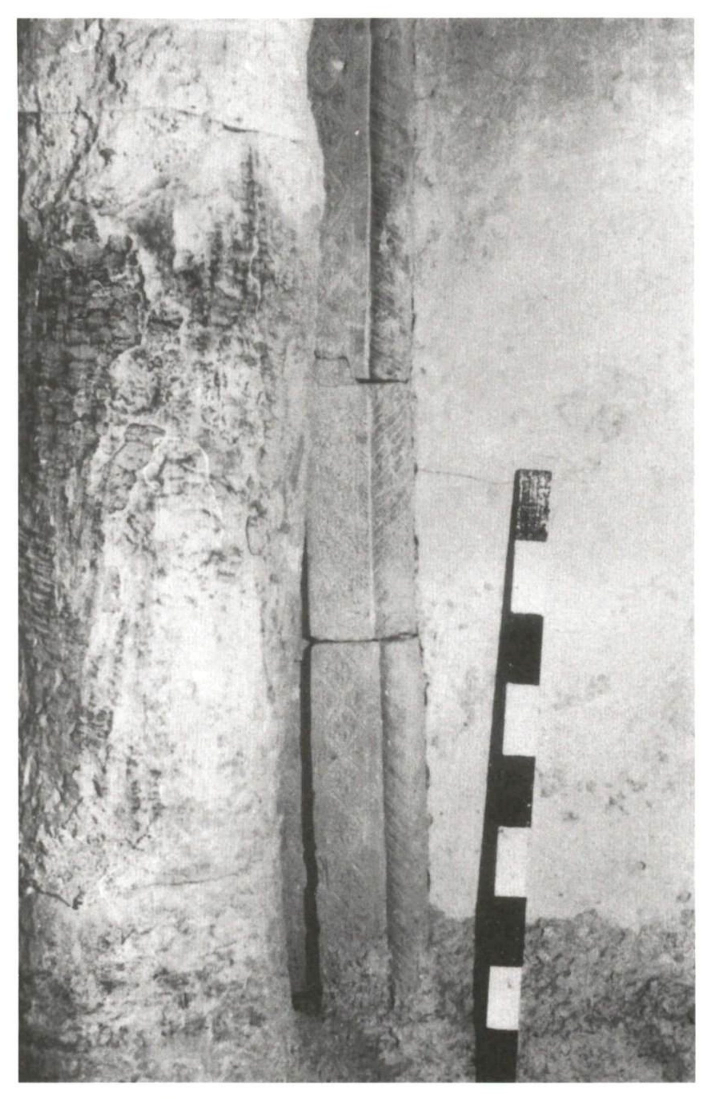
(Fig.93) The mihrab of the mosque of Abu Mansur



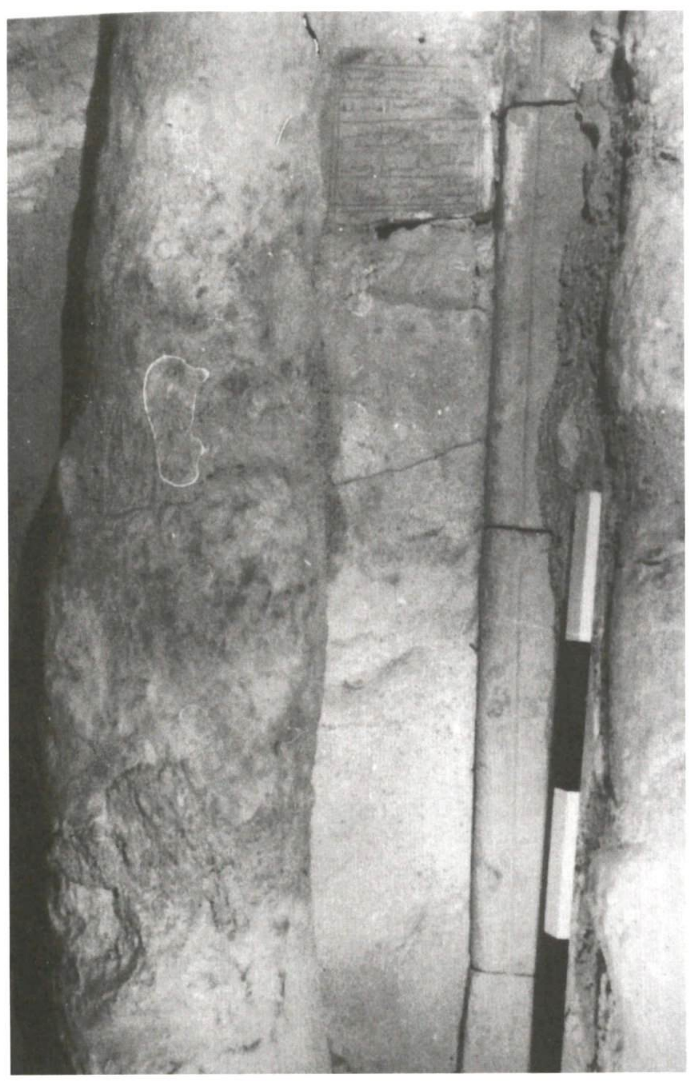
(Fig.94) Decorations flanking the mihrab.



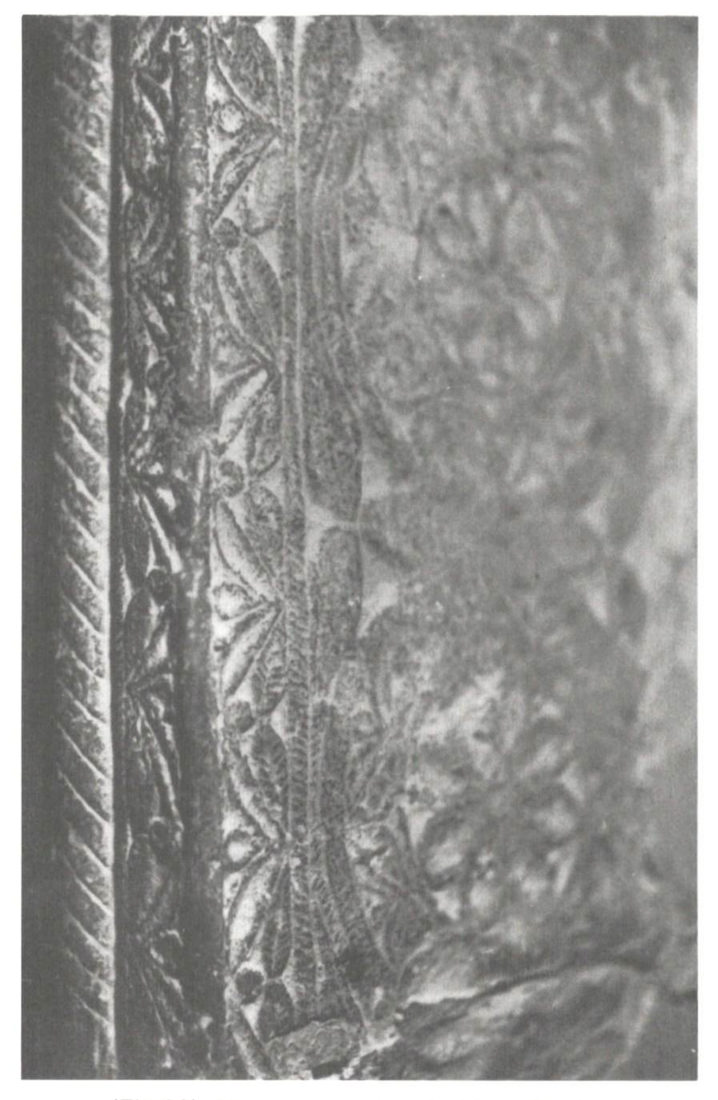
(Fig.95) Decorations flanking the mihrab.



(Fig.96) Decorations to the right hand side when facing the mihrab.



(Fig.97) **A column to the left hand side when facing the mihrab.**



(Fig.98) Decorations inside the mihrab.



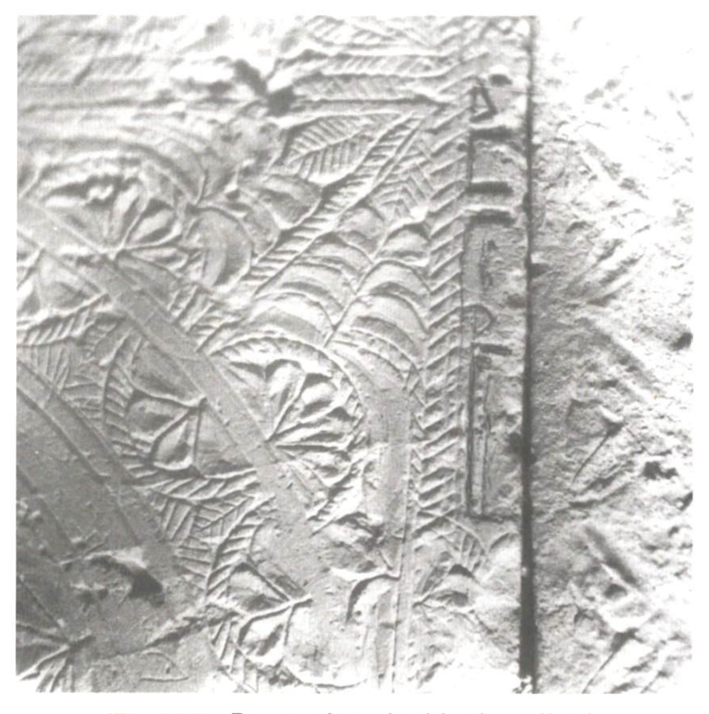
(Fig.99) Decorations inside the mihrab.



(Fig.100) **Decorations inside the mihrab.**



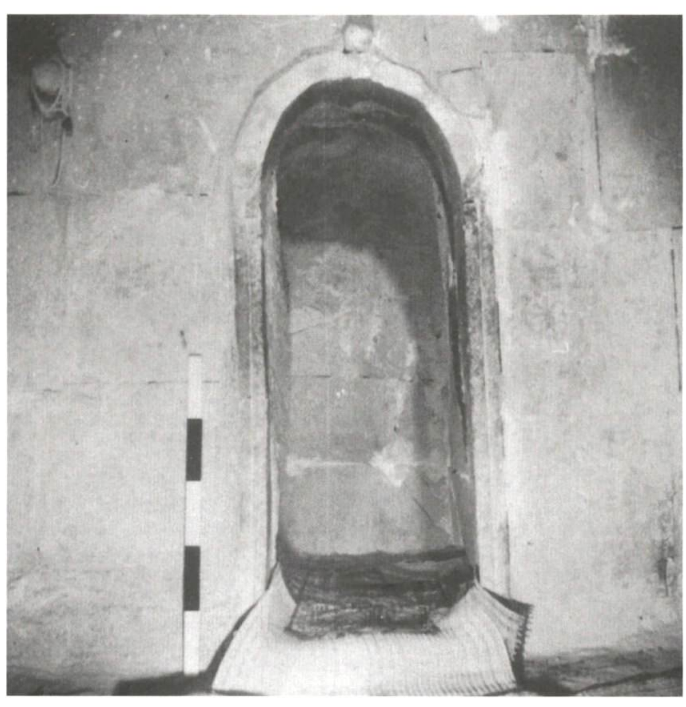
(Fig.101) Decorations inside the mihrab.



(Fig.102) Decorations inside the mihrab.



(Fig.103) Decorations inside the mihrab.



(Fig.104) The mihrab of Abu Mansur's mosque with two pieces of stone projecting from the qibla wall.



(Fig.105) A decorated stone used when restoring the ceiling of the mosque of Abu Mansur.



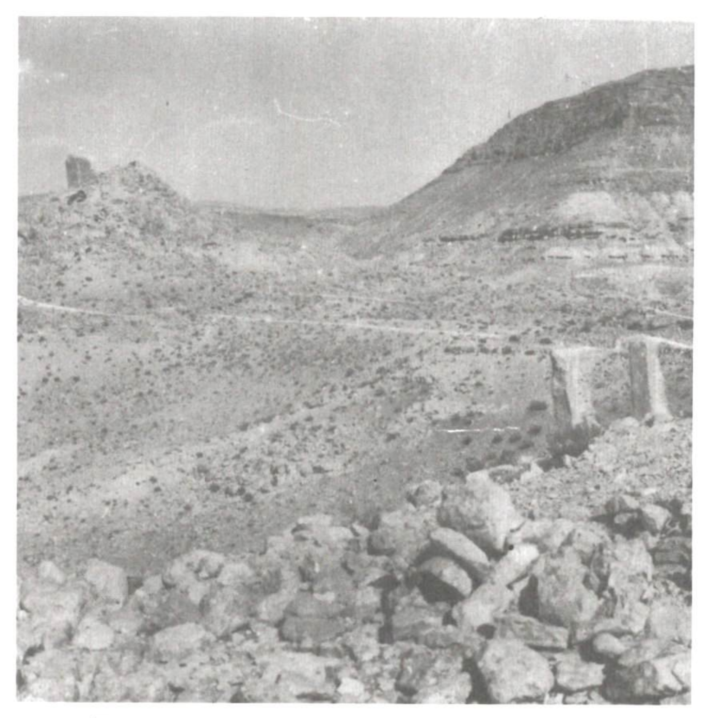
(Fig.106) A decorated stone used when restoring the ceiling of the mosque of Abu Mansur.



(Fig.107) A decorated stone found outside the mosque.



(Fig.108) **A capital of a column in Abu Mansur's mosque.**

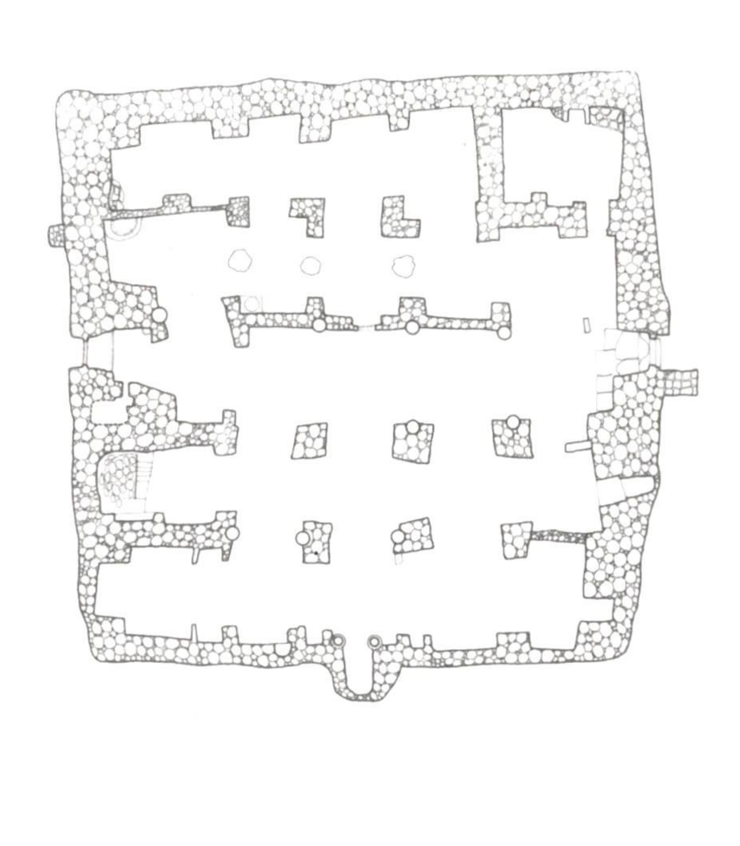


(Fig.109) A view of the old city of Sharwas.

(Fig.110) A collapsed building which occupies the city centre

(Fig.111) The remains of what was the Library of Nafusa as it looks from the south west side of Sharwas.

(Fig.112) The mosque of Sharwas with its Bouth. west entrance.





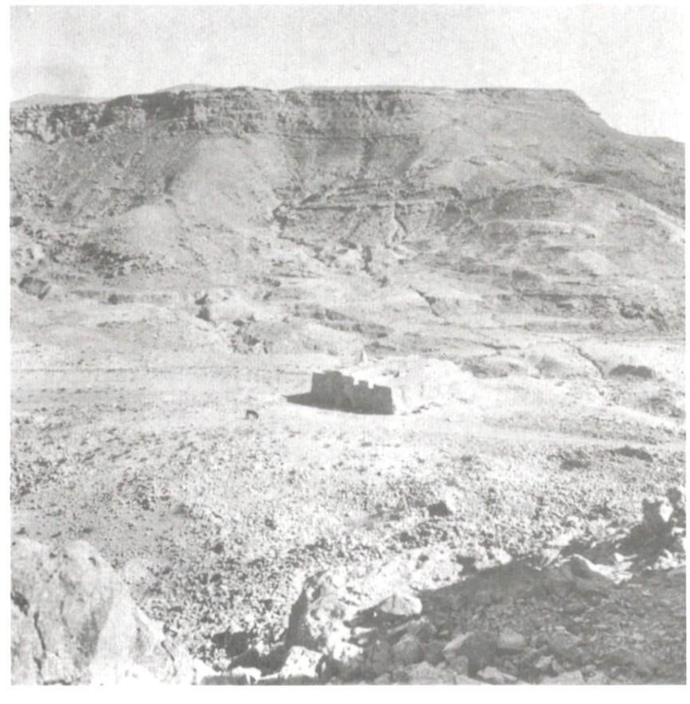
. *(Fig.113)* The ground plan of the mosque of Sharwas.

(*Fig.114*) The south west wall of Sharwas mosque.

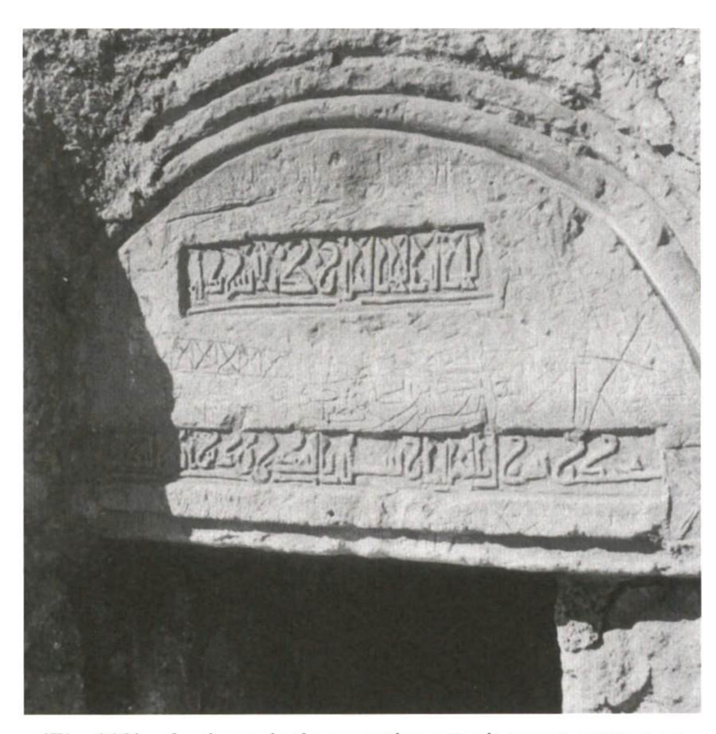


(*Fig.115*) The mosque of Sharwas with its mihrab projecting from the wall towards the south east.

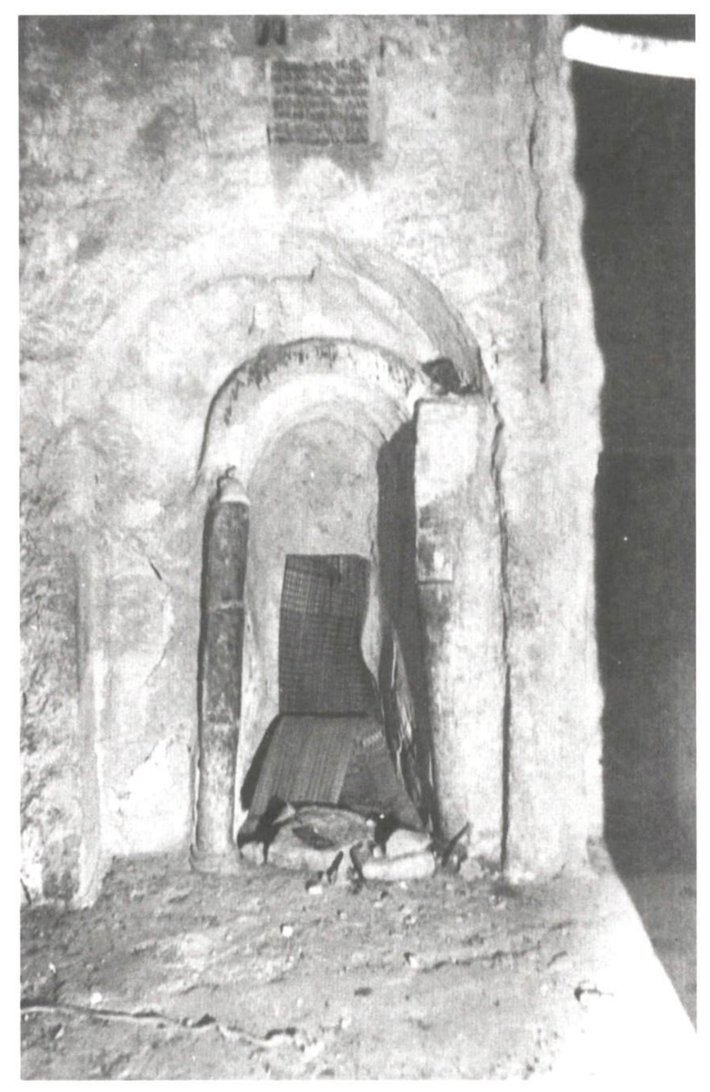
(*Fig.116*) The mosque of Sharwas as itlooks from the north east side with its gum'a dominating the roof.



(*Fig.117*) The city of Sharwas with its mosque in the centre.



(Fig.118) **An inscription on the south west entrance.**



(Fig.119) The mihrab in the mosque of Sharwas.

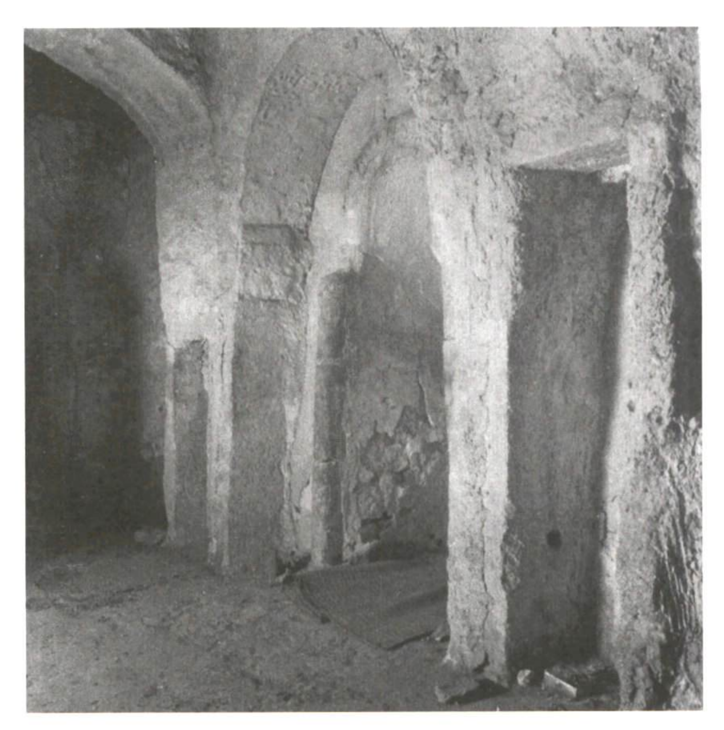


(Fig.120) An inscription found on the gibla wall to the left hand side when facing the mihrab.

(Fig.121) An inscription found above the mihrab.



(Fig.122) An inscription found above the mihrab.



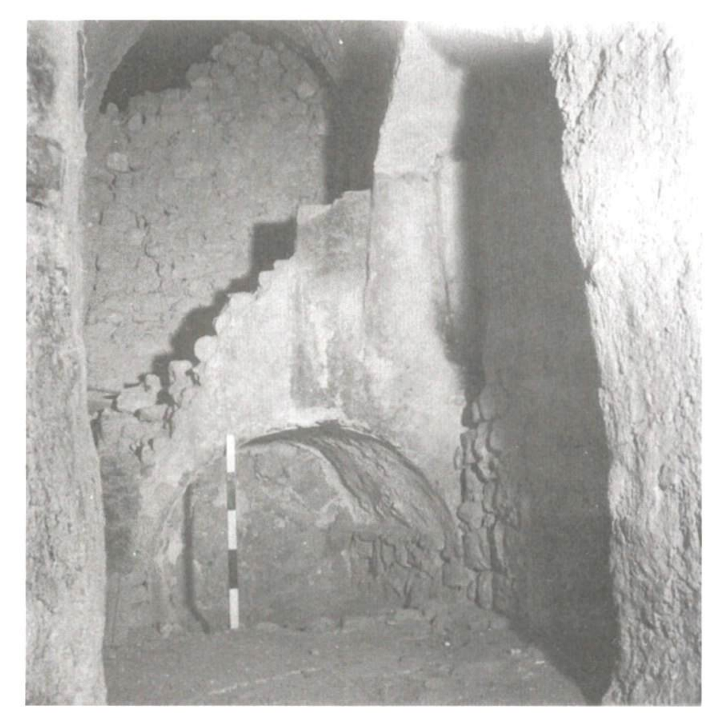
(*Fig.123*) The mihrab of the mosque of Sharwas.



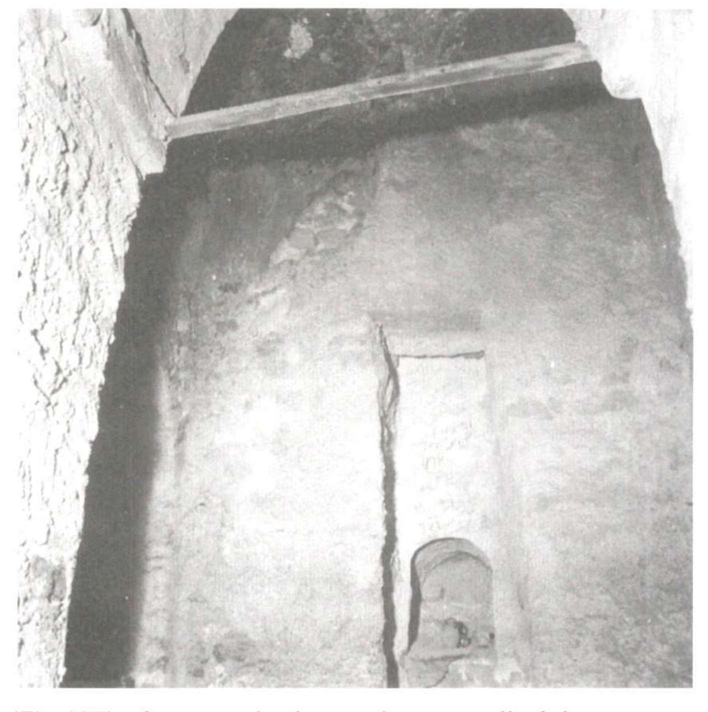
(Fig.124) The gibla riwaq in Sharwas mosque.



(Fig.125) The riwaq next the gibla one towards the north west.



(*Fig.126*) The staircase leading to the roof. It lies in the southwest side of the mosque.



(*Fig.127*) A recess in the north east wall of the mosque.

(*Fig.128*) A decorated stone used in the building of the only recess in the north east wall..



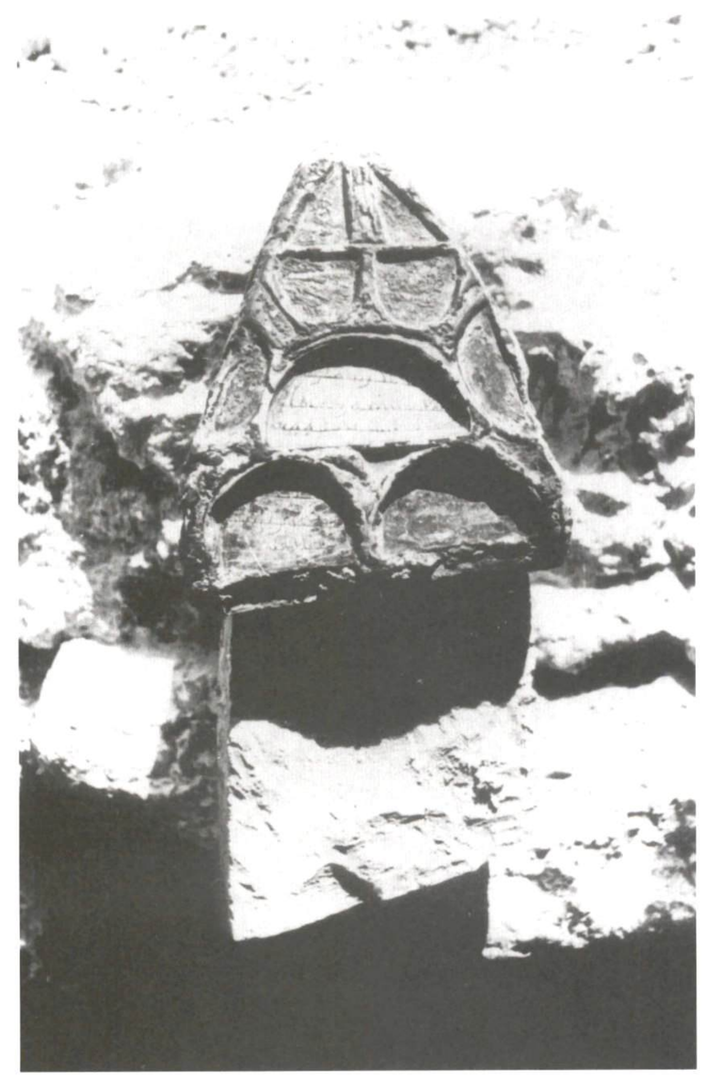
(*Fig.129*) An opening in the partition wall in the mosque of Sharwas.



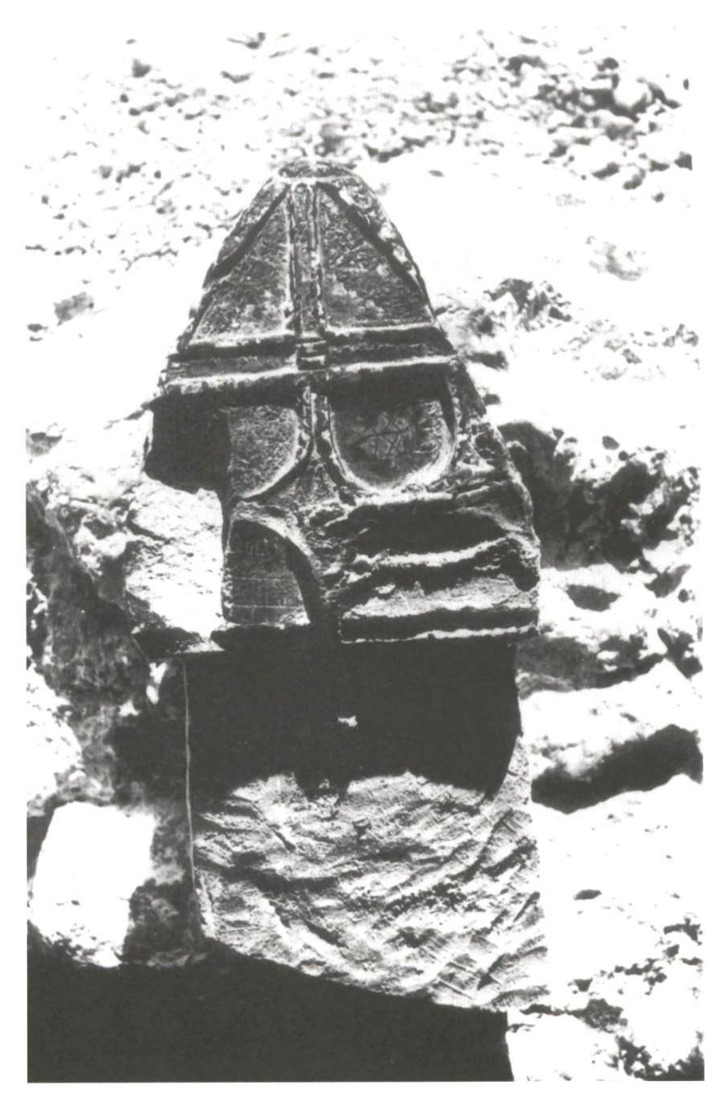
(Fig.130) An inscription and decoration on the partition wall as it looks from the south east side within the mosque.



(Fig.131) **A decorated stone projecting out of the partition wall.**



(Fig.132) A decorated stone of the partition wall.



(Fig.133) **A decorated stone of the partition wall.**



(Fig.134) The interior of Sharwas mosque.



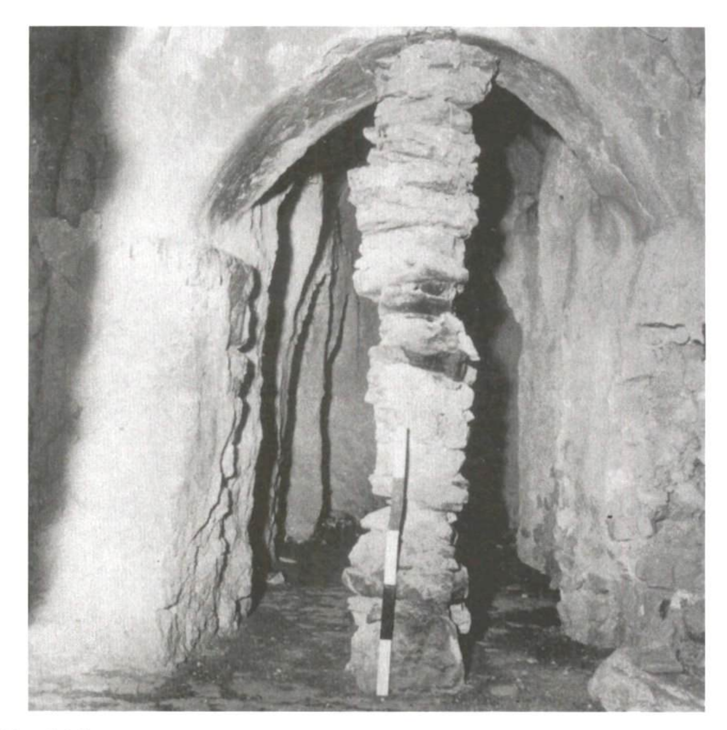
(Fig.135) The interior of Sharwas mosque.

(Fig.136) An inscription in the middle riwaq in the mosque of Sharwas.

(Fig.137) Inscriptions found on the arch opposite to the mihrab in the middle riwaq.

(Fig.138) An inscription found in the middle riwaq in Sharwas.

(Fig.139) An inscription found in the middle riwaq in Sharwas.



(Fig.140) The north western riwaq of the mosque of Sharwas where the restoration work was extensive.

(Fig.141) Inscriptions found on the arch opposite to mihrab in the women's section.

(Fig.142) Inscriptions found on the arch opposite to mihrab in the women's section.

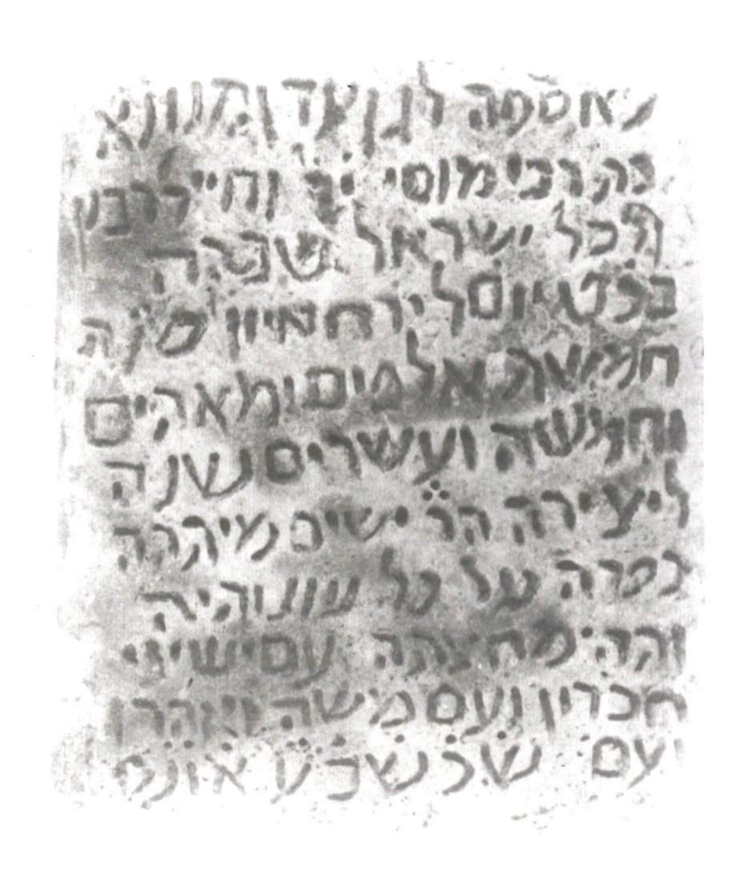
(Fig.143) An inscription found in the middle riwaq facing the qibla wall.

(Fig.144) A decorated stone found in the north west corner of the mosque.

(Fig.145) The north west wall of the mosque of Sharwas, which was a result of restorations.

(Fig.146) An inscription found near the entrance of the small room which occupies the north east corner of the sanctuary.

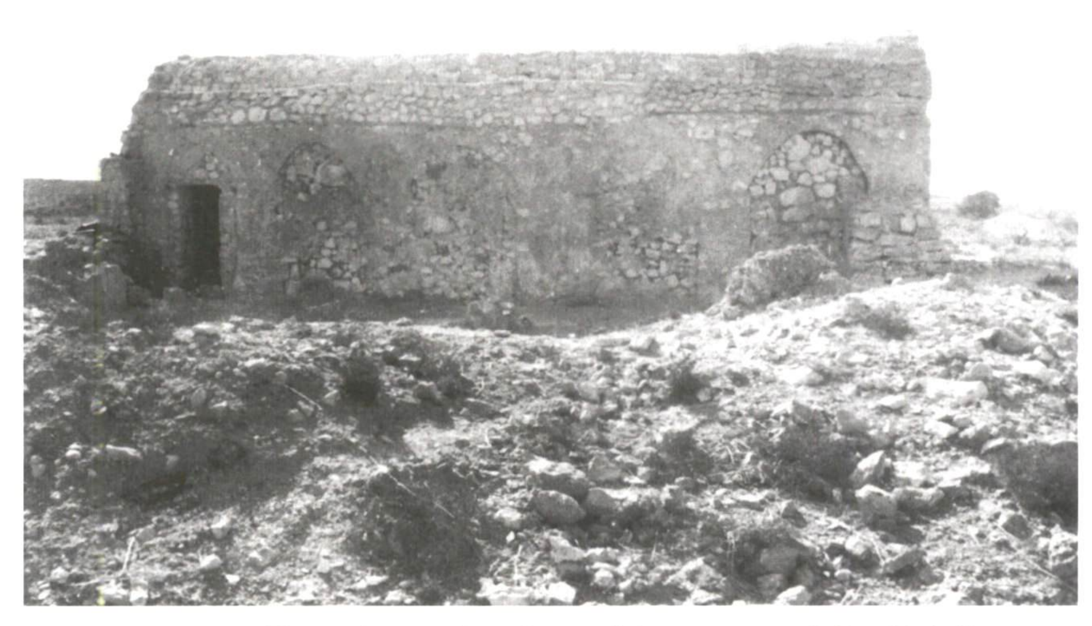
(Fig.147) Hebrew inscription found in Tindimmira but it was taken from the city of Sharwas.



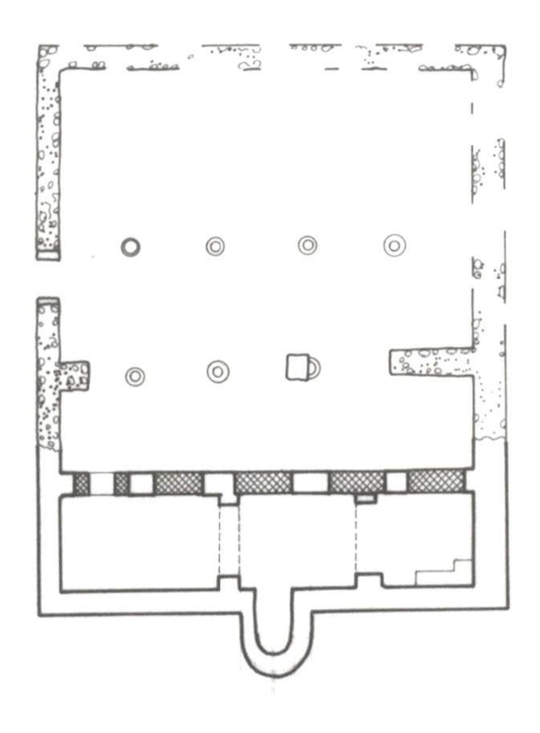
(Fig.148) Hebrew inscription found in the Jewish cemetery which lies at the north east side of Sharwas city.

(Fig.149) The old site of the town of Wighu.

(Fig.150) The mosque of Abu Mahdi in Wighu as it looks from the south east.



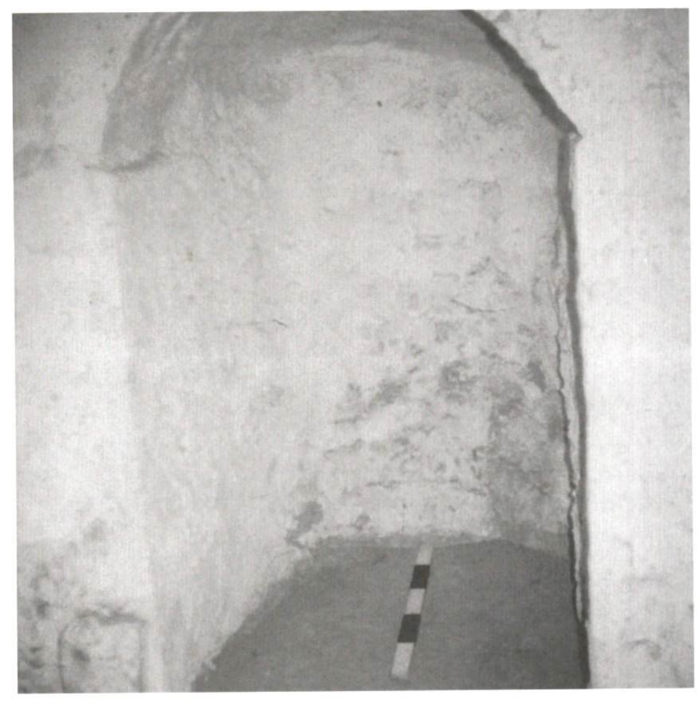
(Fig. 151) The only standing riwaq of the mosque of Abu Mahdi.





(Fig.152) **The ground plan of Abu Mahdi's mosque.**

(Fig.153) The interior of the mosque of Abu Mahdi.

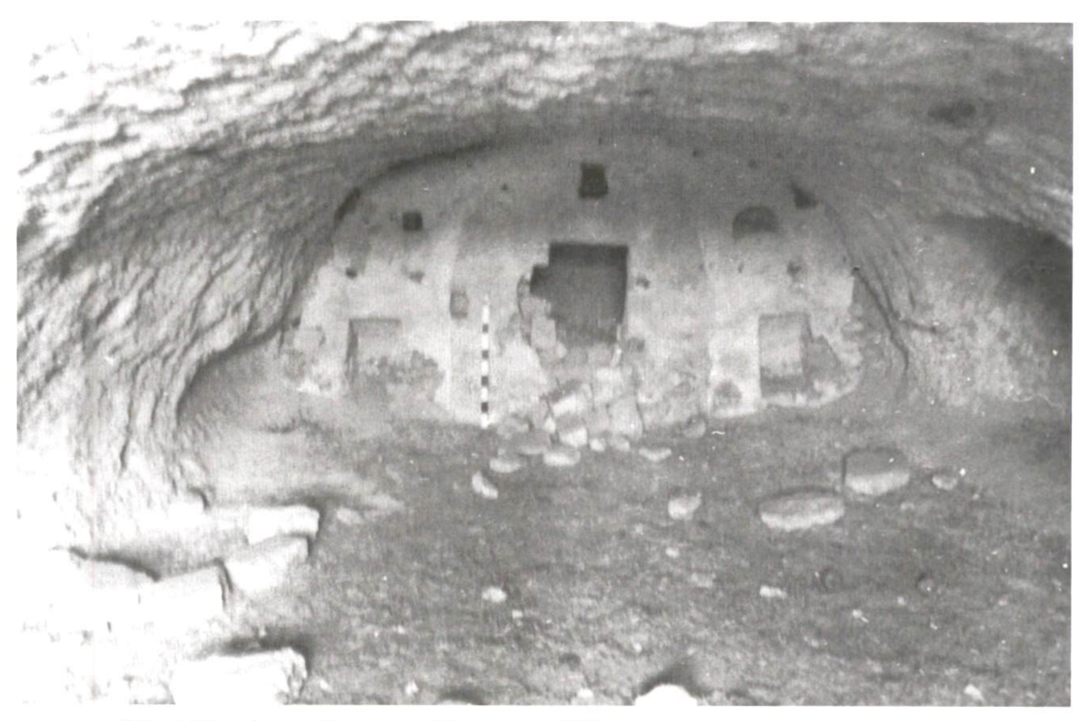


(Fig.154) The plain mihrab in Abu Mahdi's mosque.

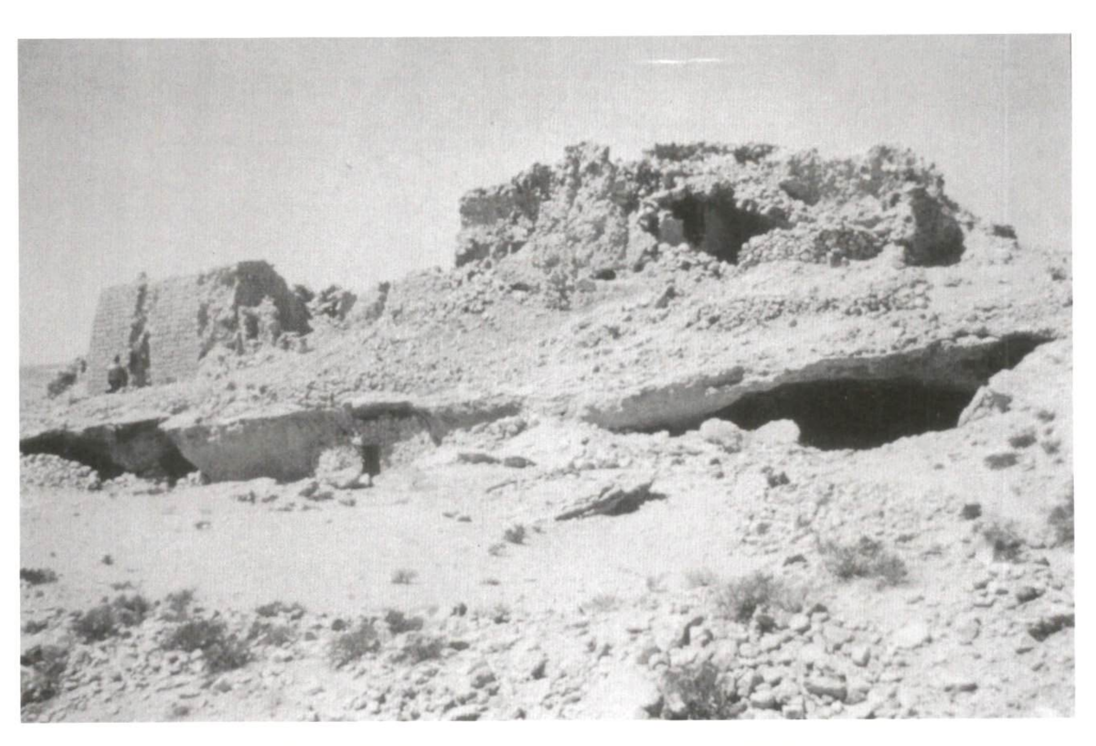
(Fig.155) The mosque of Abu Mahdi with the remains showing its extension towards the north west.



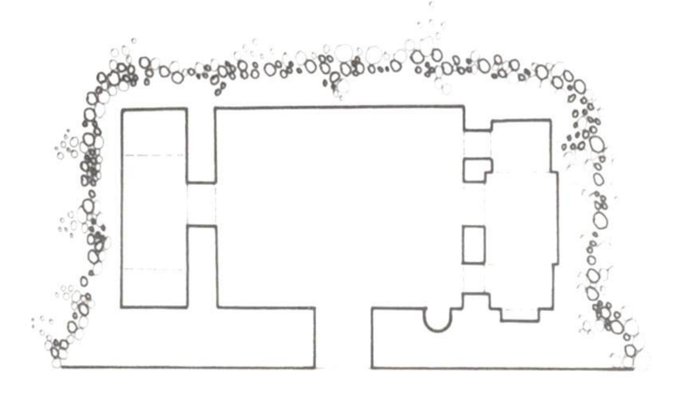
(Fig.156) The mosque of Abu Mahdi as it appears from the south west side.

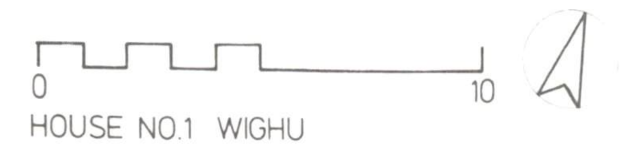


(*Fig. 157*) An underground house in Wighu. Houses in the old town of Wighu.

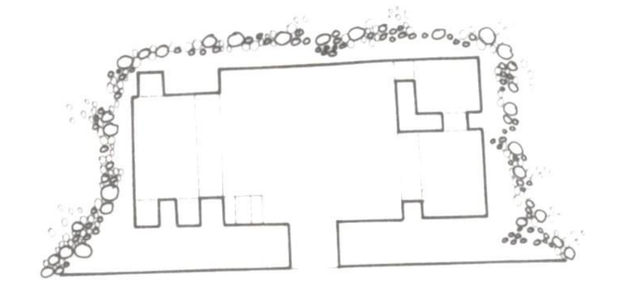


(Fig.158) A ground plan of a house in Wighu.





(Fig.159) **A ground plan of a house in Wighu.**





(Fig.160) **A ground plan of a house in Wighu.**



(Fig.161) The courtyard of the house of the mihrab in Wighu.



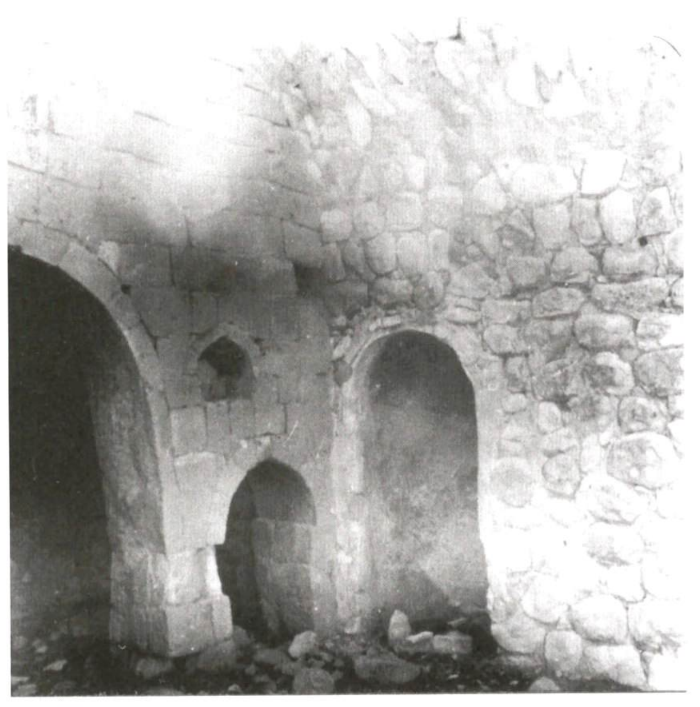
(Fig.162) Remains of an old house in Wighu.

(Fig.163) An old house in the south west side of the town of Wighu.

(Fig.164) The entrance of the house of the mihrab.



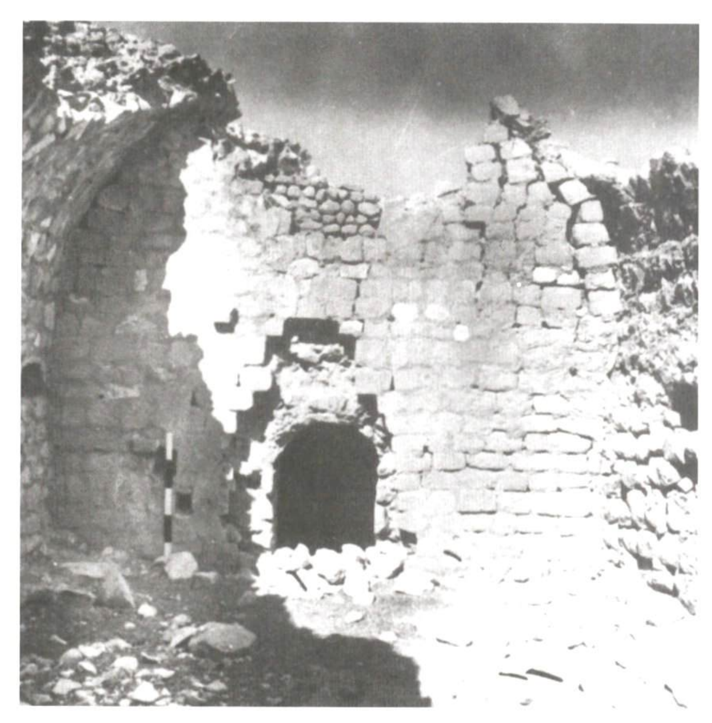
(Fig.165) An entrance of a house in the west side of Wighu.



(Fig.167) The interior of the house of the mihrab.

(Fig.168) The main room in the house of the mihrab as it looks from the south west.

(Fig.169) The courtyard of the house of the mihrab with a room in the south west of the house.



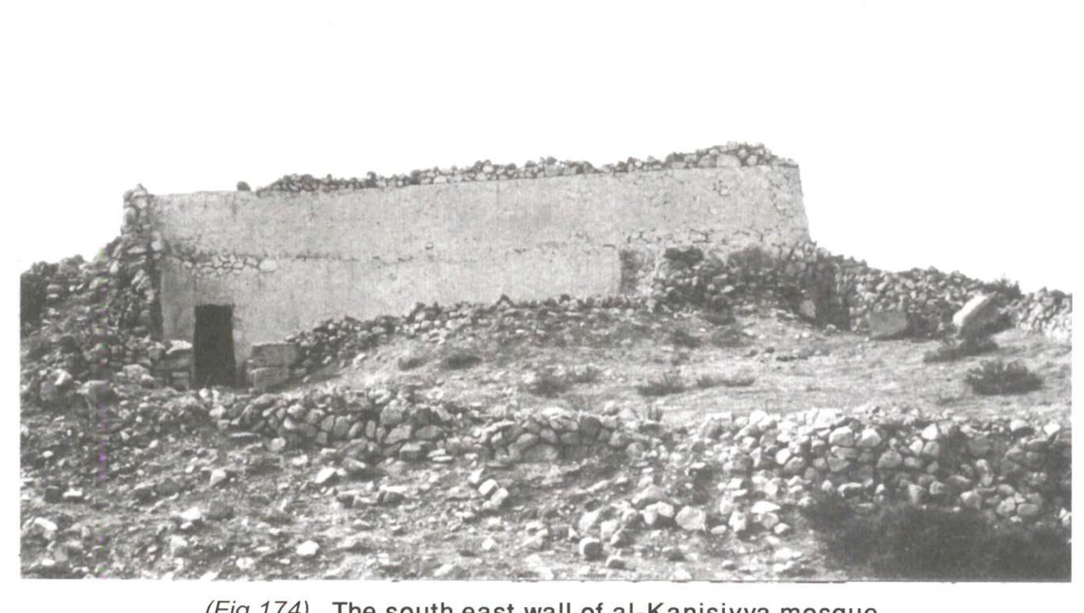
(Fig.170) The courtyard of the house of the mihrab with a room in the south west of the house.



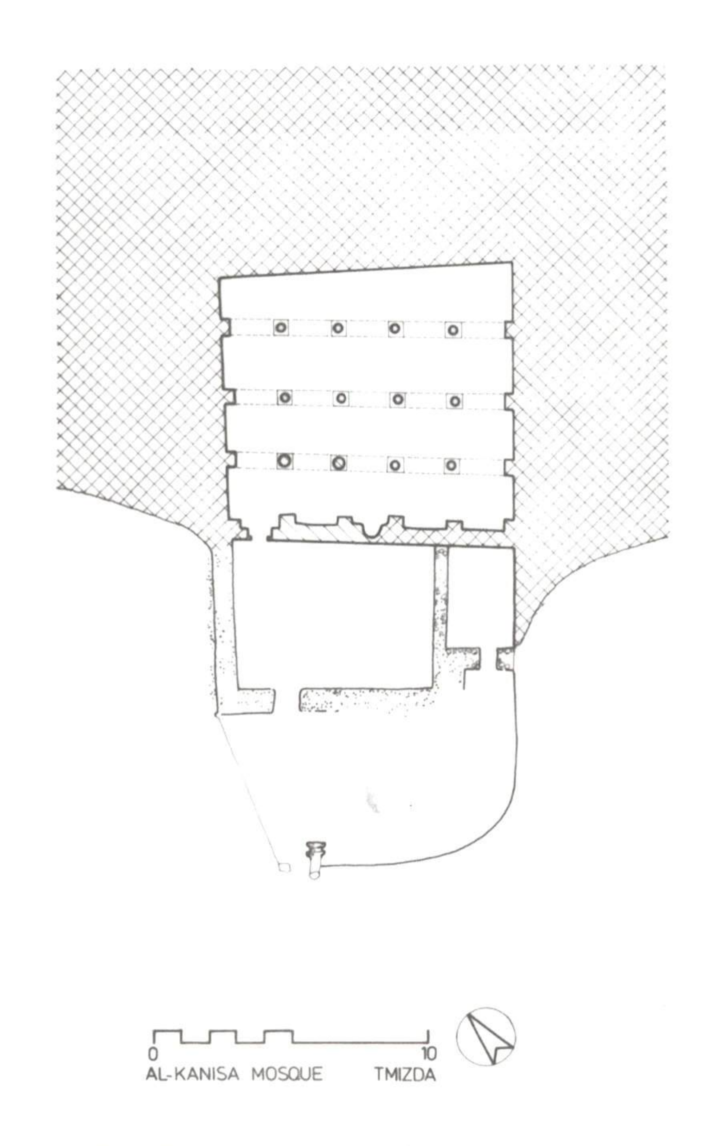
(Fig.171) Remains of an old house in Wighu.

(*Fig.172*) Remains of an old house in Wighu.

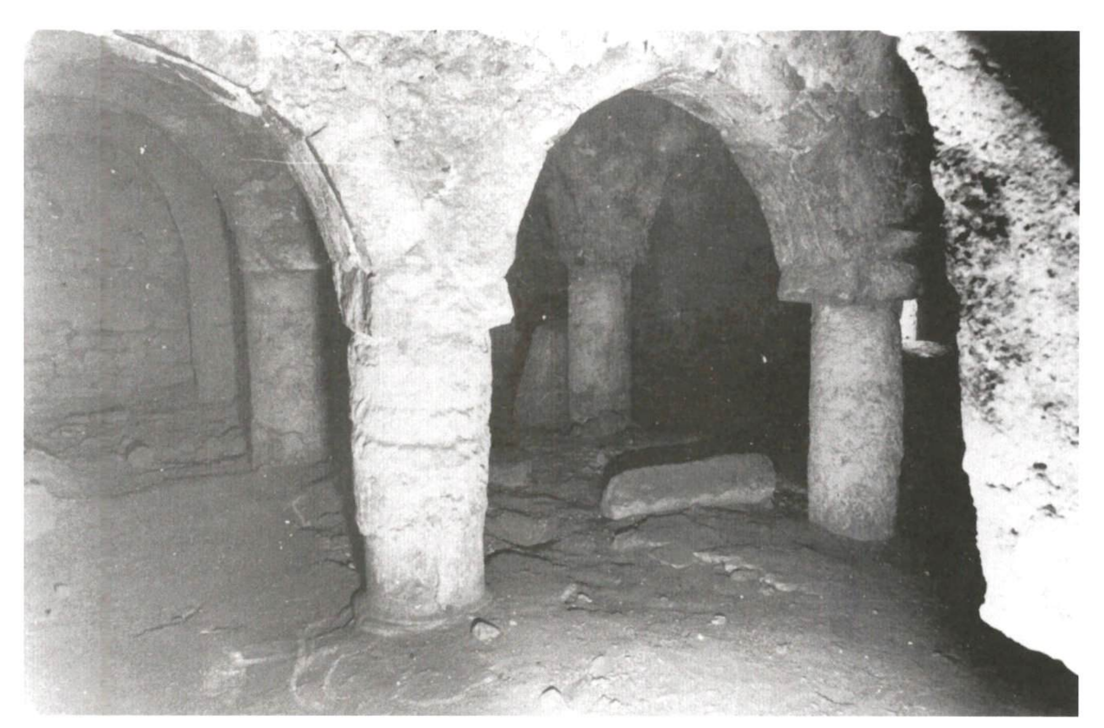
(*Fig.173*) The roof of al-Kanisiyya mosque in Tmizda area.



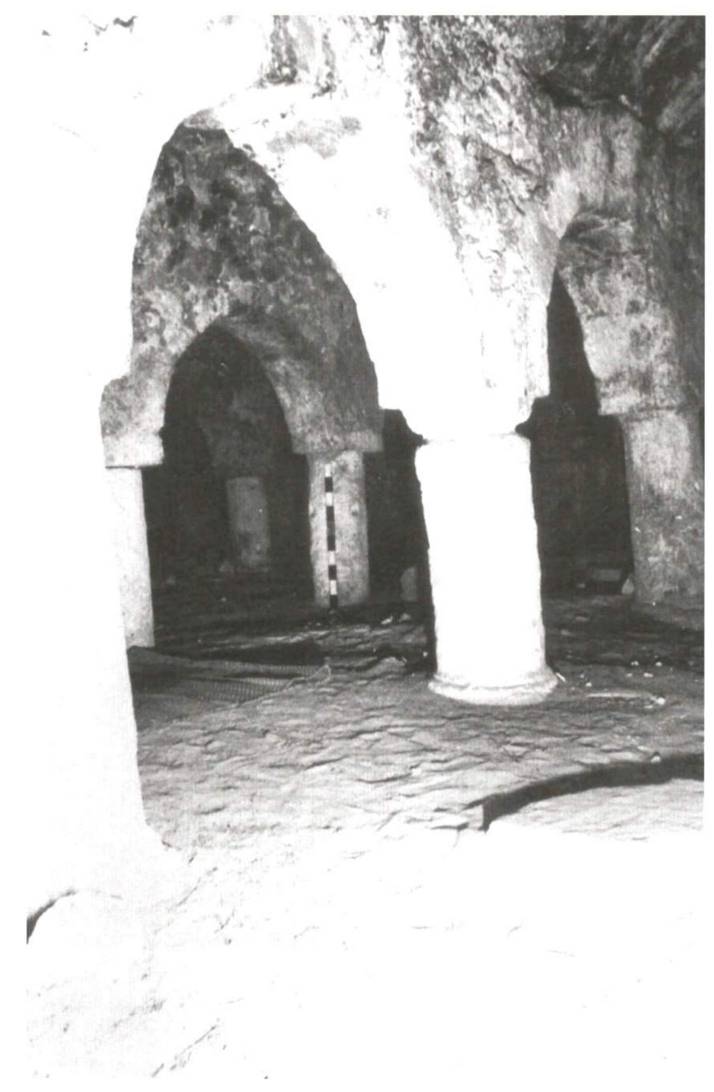
(Fig.174) The south east wall of al-Kanisiyya mosque.



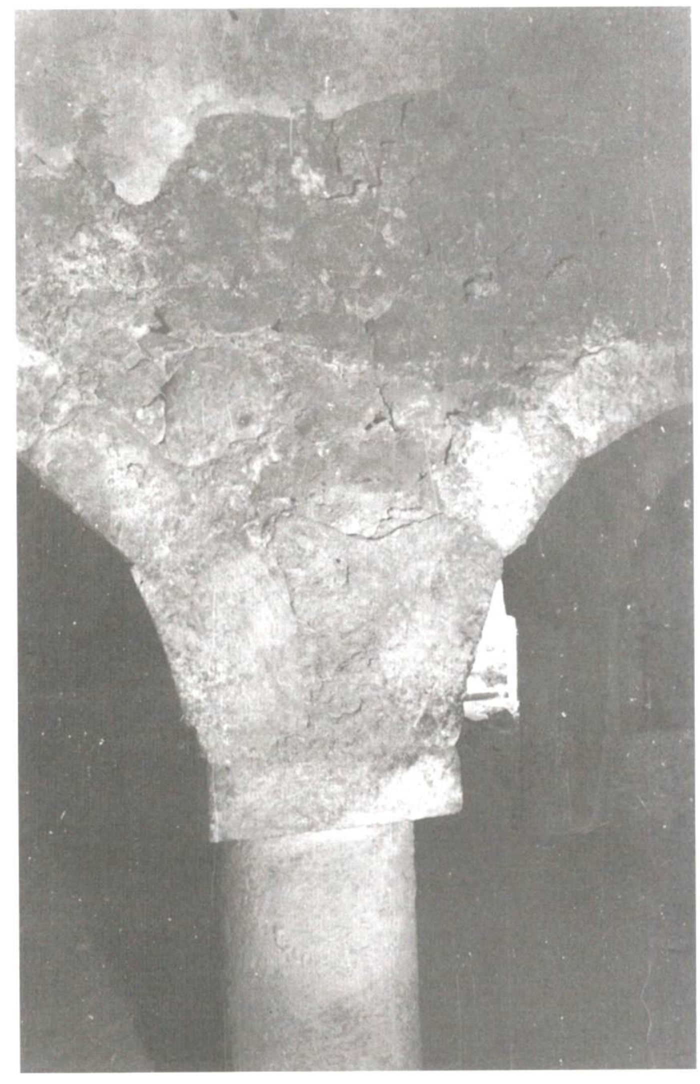
(Fig.175) **The ground plan of al- Kanisiyya mosque.**



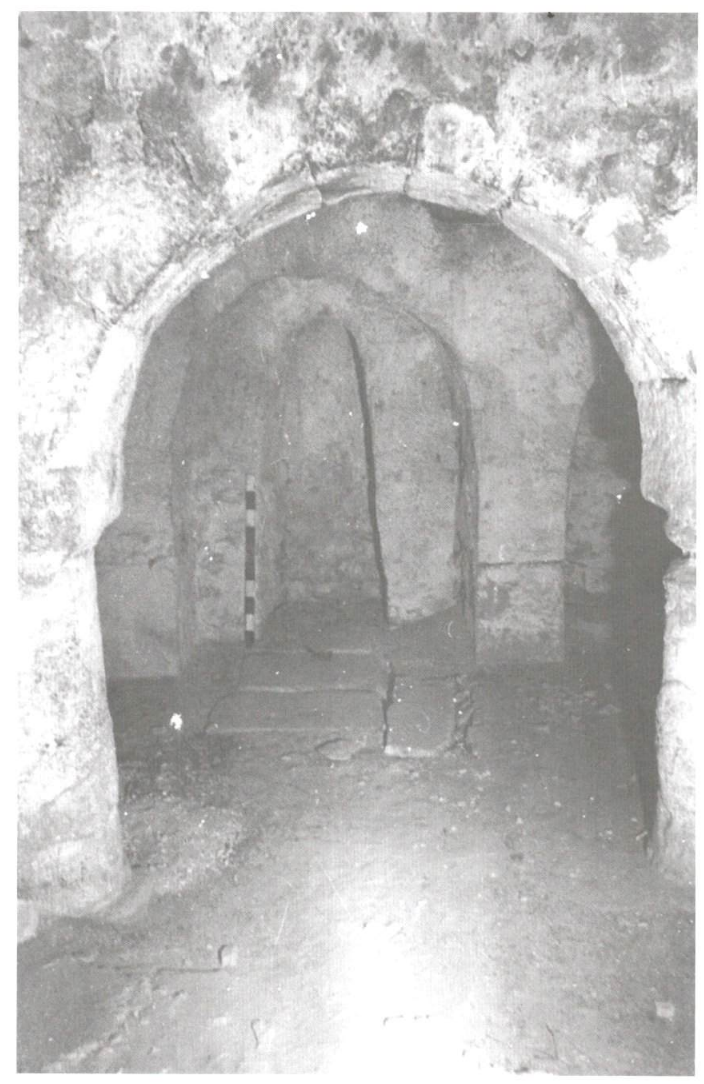
(Fig.176) The interior of al- Kanisiyya mosque.



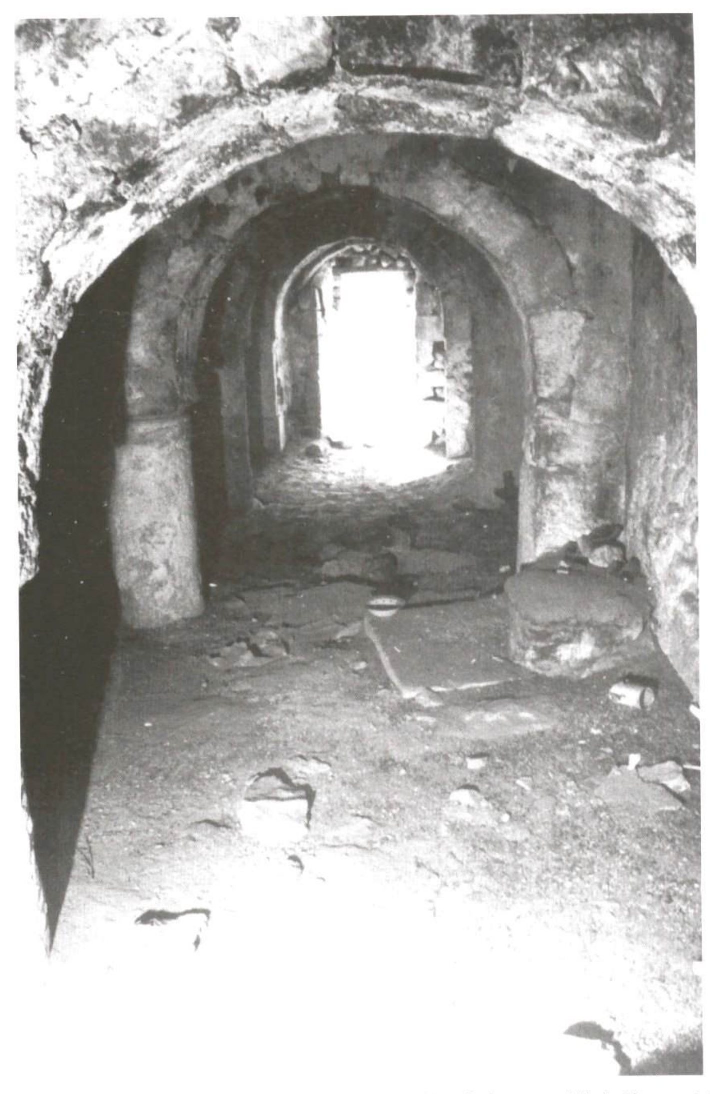
(Fig.177) The interior of al- Kanisiyya mosque.



(Fig.178) An illustration of a column in al-Kanisiyya mosque



(Fig.179) The mihrab of al- Kanisiyya.



(Fig.180) The only entrance of al- Kanisiyya which lies at the south west corner of the mosque.

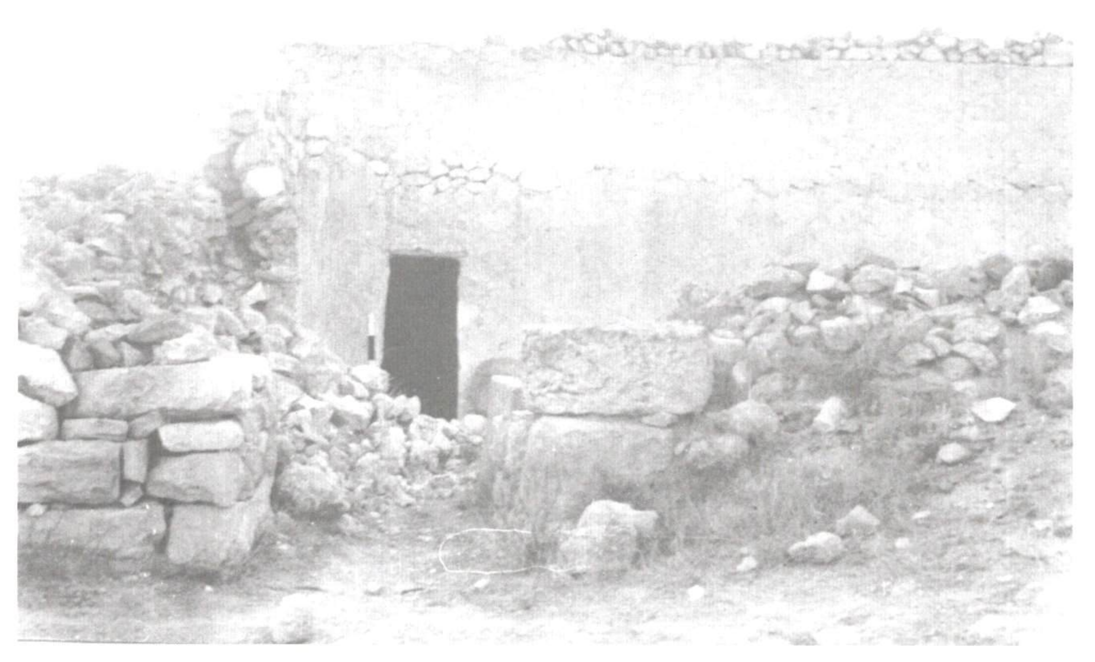


(Fig.181) The interior of al- Kanisiyya mosque.



(Fig.182) The interior of al- Kanisiyya mosque.

(*Fig.183*) The interior of al- Kanisiyya mosque.



(*Fig.184*) The south east side of al- Kanisiyya.

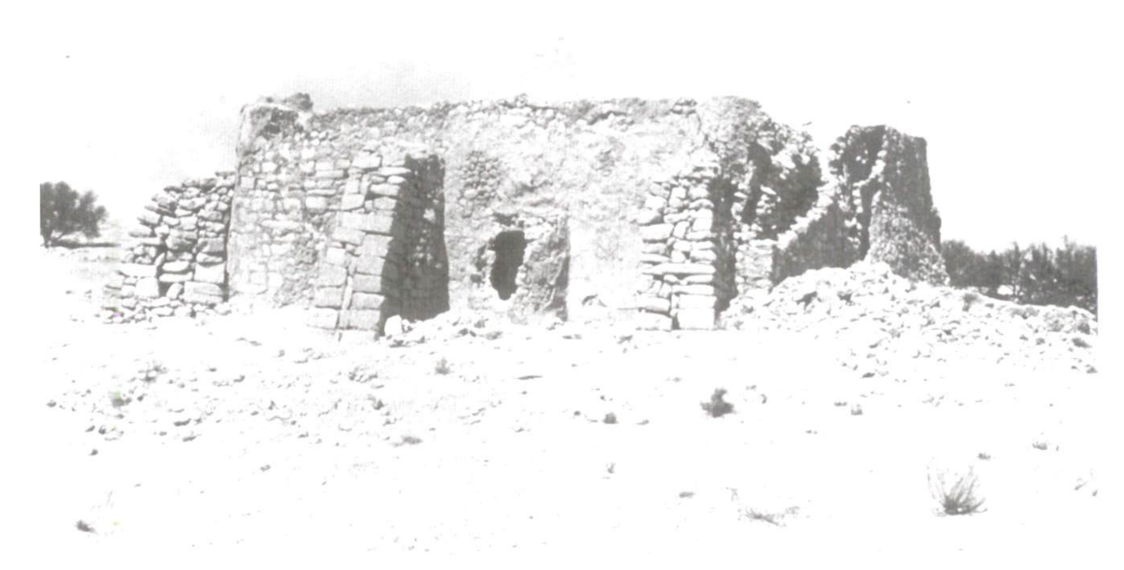


(Fig.185) The south east side of al- Kanisiyya.

(Fig.186) The courtyard of al- Kanisiyya which extends to the south east side of the mosque.

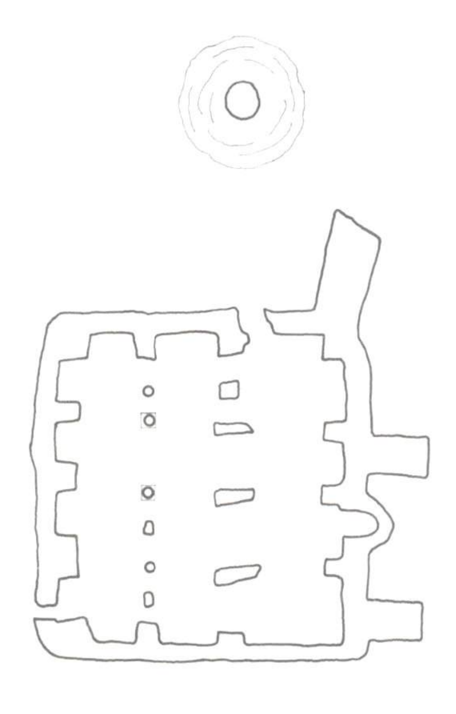
(Fig.187) Roman stones found a few metres to the south west of the mosque.

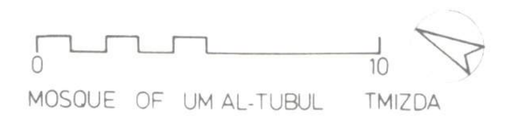
(Fig.188) Remains of Roman columns found around the mosque.



(Fig.189) The mosque of Urnm al-Tubul as it looks from the south east side.

(Fig.190) The mosque of Umm al-Tubul with its entrance in the north east wall.





(Fig. 191) **The ground plan of the mosque of Umm al-Tubul.**



(Fig.192) The south east wall with mihrab projecting out of the wall.



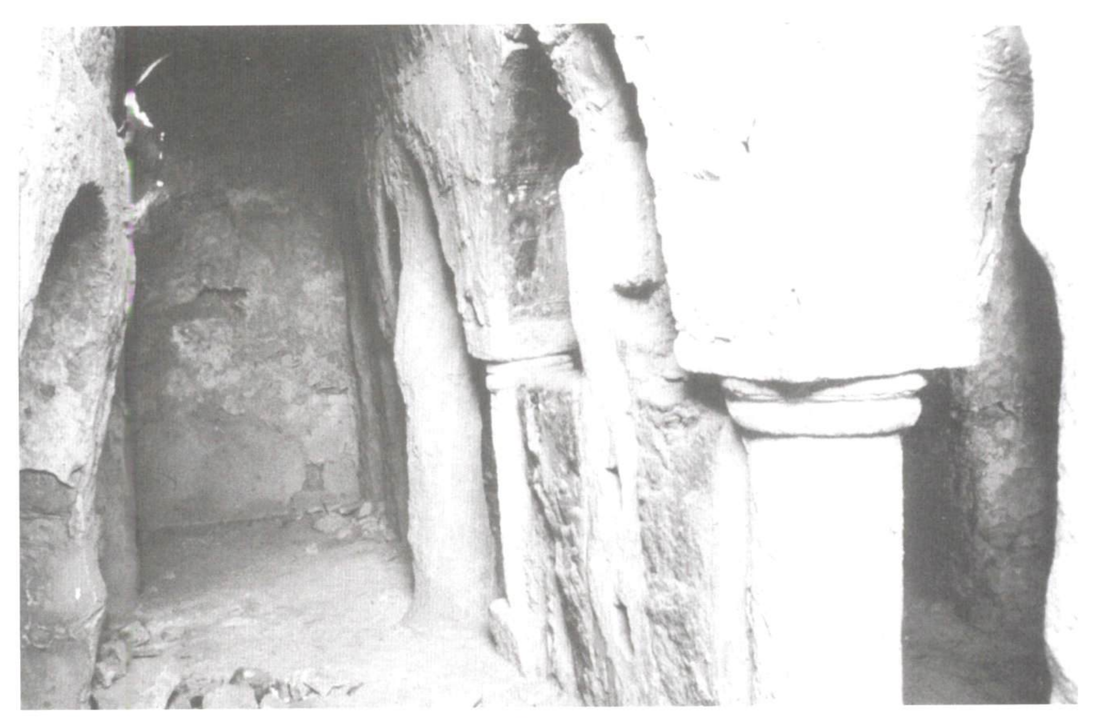
(Fig.193) **Two decorated stones found on the qibla wall.**

(Fig.194) The interior of Umm al-Tubul mosque.

(Fig.195) The interior of Umm al-Tubul mosque.

(Fiq.196) Stucco design on the south west wall of the sanctuary.

(Fig.197) A decorated stone on a column within the mosque.



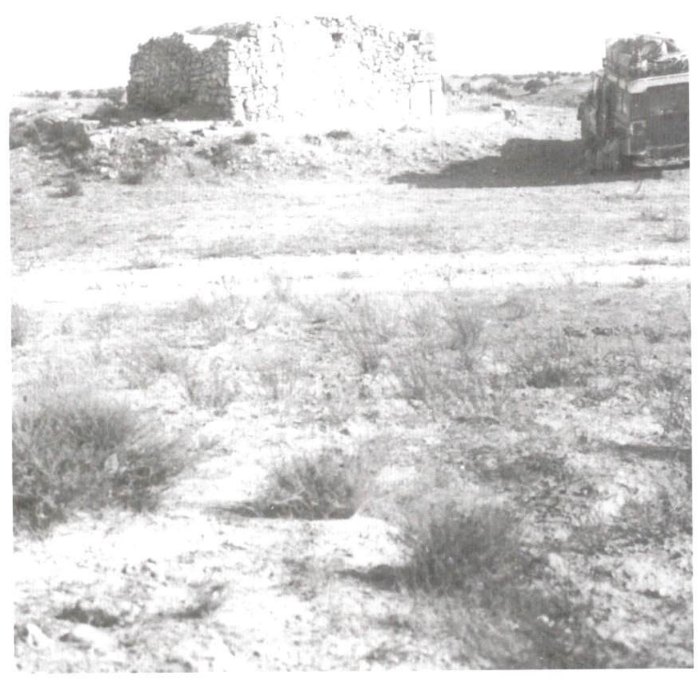
(Fig.198) Roman columns within the mosque of Ummal-Tubul.



(Fig.199) Roman columns within the mosque of Ummal-Tubul.



(Fig.200) The north west corner of Umm al-Tubul where bricks were used.



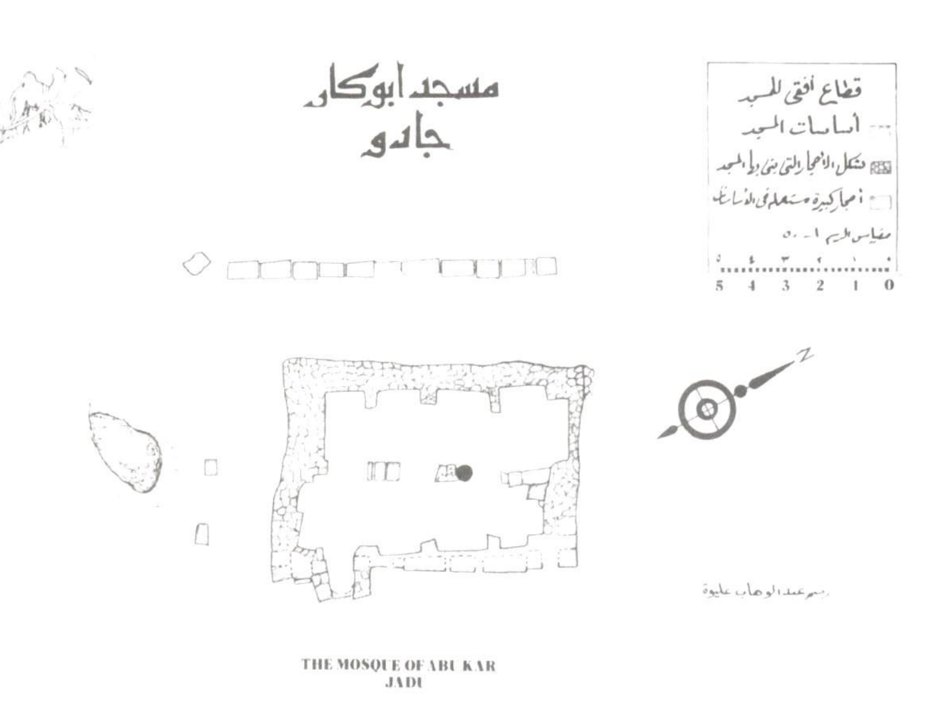
(Fig.201) The mosque of Abu Kar standing in Isolation.



(Fig.202) The south west wall of the mosque of Abu Kar.



(Fig.203) A decorated stone near the entrance of the mosque.



(Fig.204) The ground plan of Abu Kar.



(Fig.205) The interior of the mosque of Abu Kar.



(Fig.206) **The north west wall of the mosque of Abu Kar.**



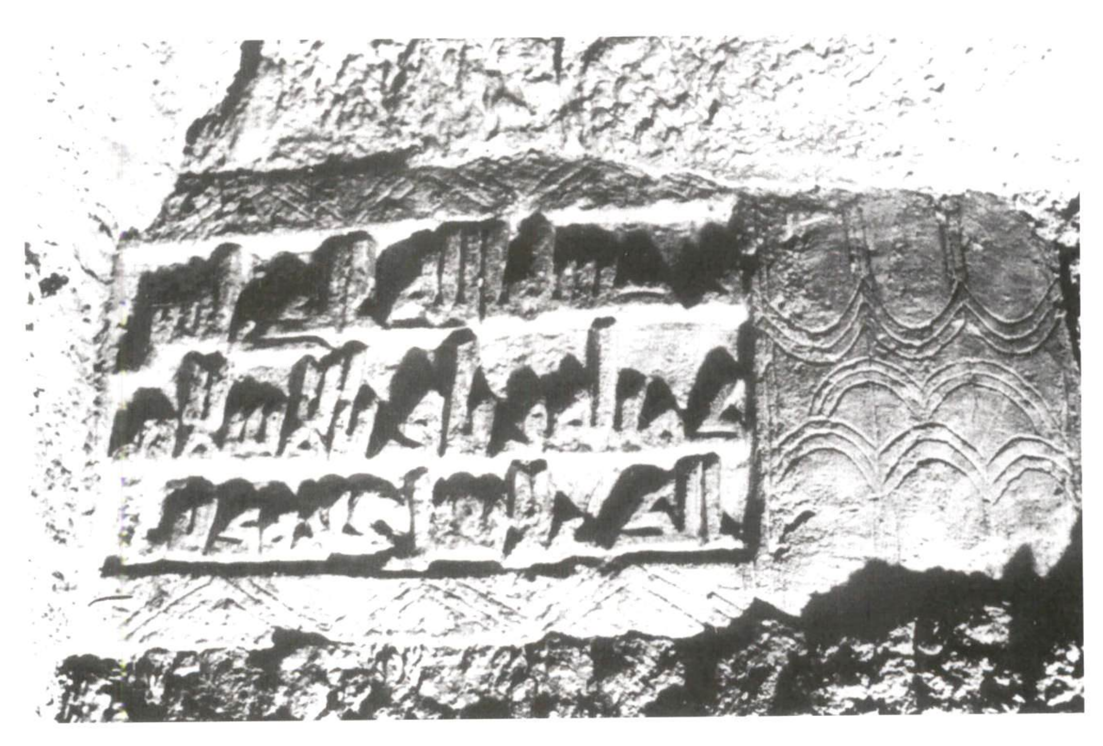
(Fig.207) **Remains of the foundation extending to the south west of the mosque.**



(Fig.208) The entrance of Abu Kar's mosque.

(Fig.209) Inscriptions found on the arch opposite to the mihrab in the middle riwaq in the mosque of Sharwas.

(Fig.210) An inscription found on the partition wall in Sharwas.



(Fig.211) An inscription found in the mosque of Sharwas.



(Fig.212) An inscription found in the mosque of Sharwas.

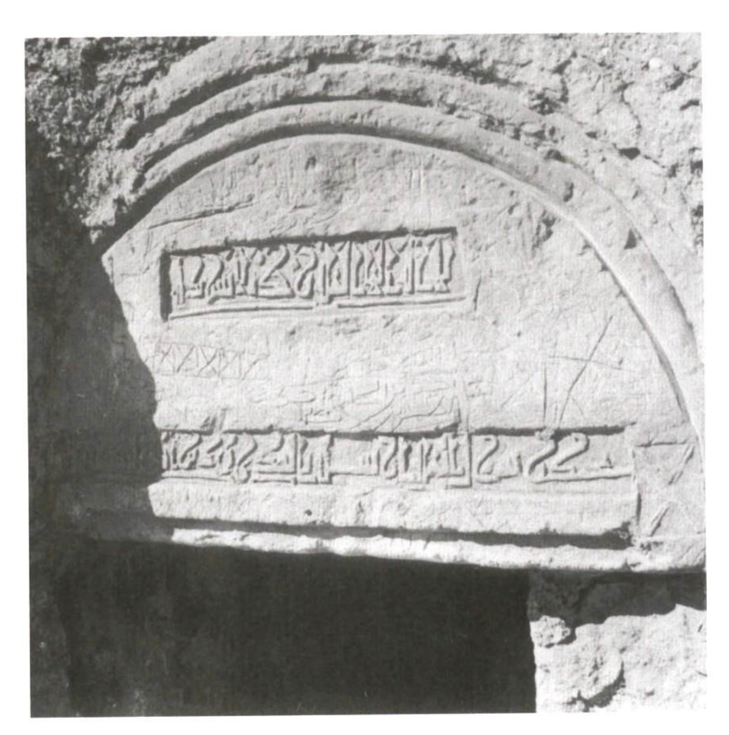


(Fig.213) An inscription found in the mosque of Sharwas.

(Fig.214) An inscription found in the mosque of Sharwas.

(Fig.215) An inscription found in the mosque of Sharwas.

(Fig.216) An inscription found on the mihrab in Sharwas.



(Fig.217) An inscription found on the south west entrance of the mosque of Sharwas.



(Fig.218) Kufic inscription found flanking the mihrab in Abnayan.



(Fig.219) **Kufic inscription found flanking the mihrab in Abnayan.**



(Fig.220) An inscription found on the entrance of Tnumayat mosque.

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